University of Alberta

Métis Land Uses and Boreal Forest Management in Northwest Saskatchewan: Contextualizing Perception, Culture and Conflict

by

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Abstract

This research describes Métis involvement in, and Métis perceptions of Boreal Forest management in Northwest Saskatchewan province, Canada. The study uses a total of 74 qualitative interviews to describe findings relevant to Métis traditional land uses, Métis involvement as stakeholders in forest policy and perceptions of forest policy outcomes. Using sociological theory frameworks that attend to the role of traditions, agency, power structures and social values I interpret the concerns highlighted by Métis research participants as well as underlying structures that form a basis for these concerns and local land-use conflicts. Local concerns over industrial degradation of the forest are found to be both literal and representative of other issues that address cultural continuity, socio-economic well-being and ethnic differences. Furthermore, the creation of social values as artifacts of both culture and environment are shown to have a strong influence on land use conflicts and as determinants of social power relations.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The ethnic history of the Métis in Canada has historically been one of an uncertain legal identity and cultural bisection between their First Nation and European ancestry. While a convenient description of what constitutes Métis culture has been a challenge for administrators (Sawchuck, 1998), the Métis themselves have evolved into a distinct and unique Aboriginal cultural group in Canada. More recent acknowledgment of their identity under Section 35 of the Constitution of Canada has also highlighted their rights and legal entitlements under this Aboriginal title (Sawchuck, 2001). An integral part of both their culture and this Aboriginal title is the access to, and use of natural resources such as wildlife and 'country-products'.

This use of natural resources by Métis in Northwest Saskatchewan province in Canada has been integral to their communities since early settlement in the area, dating back to the late 18 century (MacDougall, 2006). The Boreal forest resources in Northwest Saskatchewan have not only been of traditional and economic interest to the Métis but have been increasingly exploited by industry since the mid 1940's (Quiring, 2004). Today the Northwest Métis find themselves living in a region that has had a contentious history of resource extraction including mining, recent oil and gas operations, and commercial forestry, the focus activity in this thesis.

The Métis in the region find themselves trying not only to benefit economically from these industries, but also becoming increasingly concerned about environmental change from forestry and the loss of traditional land use activities due to environmental and lifestyle changes. These physical and social changes have manifested themselves in their communities and culture. These Métis communities are at a nexus of concern about economic well-being, traditional and cultural continuity and the rights implicit in their legislated Aboriginal title, which ensures access to traditional resources and activities. They are thus challenged to maintain cultural identity, socio-economic resilience and legal rights to tradition while engaging government, corporations and the resource extraction industries (Slowey, 2001).

Métis in the research area are included in forest decision making processes through various co-management groups as well as consultation and stakeholder fora. These processes propose to facilitate Métis well-being by incorporating concern from a cultural perspective as well as access to economic benefit from industry. However, social research has highlighted a number of current concerns held by Métis in the region. These concerns include the challenge of meeting cultural, traditional, social and economic needs and how these challenges affect their relationship with government and forestry concerns. There is also an awareness of how cultural differences and nuances influence these social relationships and their outcomes from a Métis point of view.

Métis History, Identity and Status

The Métis people of Canada were created predominantly by the mixed marriages of European fur traders and Native women (Tough *et al*, 2002). Mixed ancestry people exist throughout the colonized world. However an attribute that makes the Métis one of the more unique groups is their strong sense of cultural identity (Douaud, 2007). While people of a mixed European-Native ancestry in Canada began as early as Europeans encountered natives in the 16th century; it was the conditions of the fur trade that allowed a distinctive mixed-blood Aboriginal culture to develop in Canada. In the 17th century French fur traders began to move inland from Quebec in order to secure furs, and out of mercantile necessity formed alliances with Native groups. These alliances were most strongly formed through marriage. Sprague and Frye (1983, pg 11) describe a fur trader's admission that, "While I had the daughter I should not only have the fathers hunts but those of his relations also". Native women played a significant role due to their social and family connections and their domestic support roles which enabled the traders to concentrate on accessing Native trapped furs. This marriage to Native women was therefore motivated primarily by profit. Another benefit arose in that the children of these marriages were an extended source of 'country wives' for the successive cohorts of European traders (*ibid.*). It should also be noted that while the vast majority of Métis are of French ancestry, some were also Scots-Métis.

While the children of these mixed marriages often performed the lower-end jobs, their intercultural skills, kinship ties and knowledge of local geography became increasingly important assets in the fur industry (Tough *et al*, 2002). In the late 1700's this occupational specialization in the burgeoning frontier fur industry, along with residential separation of the 'Half-Breeds' (Métis) from the Europeans and Indians, fostered the creation of this new culture. This was particularly encouraged by French-Canadian traders who realized the benefits of *in situ* provisions and domestic support and encouraged the social cohesion and settlement of the 'Half-Breeds' (Sprague and Frye, 1983). Their skills on the land ensured that the Métis were instrumental in Canada's western expansion. Douaud (2007) writes that the reason this colonial expansion experienced so little blood shed as it did between Whites and Natives was due in large part to the Métis being able to bridge the ethnic divides.

In 1821 the Canadian fur industry underwent a significant restructuring and downturn which resulted in a reduction of fur related employment. 'Surplus' people were encouraged to move to Red River (Winnipeg) Manitoba. In Red River there already existed a vibrant Métis community engaged mainly in Plains Buffalo hunting, fishing and working for the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) (Tough *et al*, 2002). The Métis there were also instrumental in supporting the Europeans at Red River during their regular crop failures, as well as supplying the fur routes with their buffalo meat pemmican (Sprague and Frye, 1983). This congregation of Métis at Red River, active with their own industry and economy, and living largely undisturbed was the catalyst for the solidifying of the Métis identity that had been borne in northern fur areas (Tough *et al*, 2002). This Métis heart-land also the saw the birth of Métis nationalism, political will, determination of rights and willingness to defend their land and trade (Sprague and Frye, 1983). While the Red River region became the cultural epicenter of the Métis heartland, trade routes connected Métis settlements all over the Prairie Provinces of Canada (Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta) and ties between Red River the northwest remained strong. While Métis established a centre for their nation, they had also established a large, viable population in northwestern Saskatchewan beginning in the 18th century. The northwest of Saskatchewan, known as the English River District became the nexus of the western Canadian fur industry. The transport corridor from Green Lake north to Portage La Loche was the back-bone of the region's fur industry and connected the Mackenzie and Athabasca Districts with lands that were part of the Hudson's Bay drainage, essentially bridging north and south (Tough *et al*, 2002). The industry in this region required the specialized skills that the Métis became famous for, such as their portaging, boatmanship, trapping, fishing and intercultural social networks. The Métis in Saskatchewan were indispensable as *voyageurs* in York boats up to Portage La Loche. Sprague and Frye (1983, pg 19) write, "The Portage La Loche brigade was the main link in the overall system. They covered the most territory and were the most vital carriers of plains provisions, trade goods and bales of fur…"

The northwest Saskatchewan region, rich with resources, was home to significant HBC interests and they established an outpost at Ile a la Crosse. In addition, the centers of La Loche, Green Lake and Ile a la Crosse became important Métis settlements where Métis skills and knowledge were accumulated and passed on within the culture (Chartier *et al*, 2003). The Métis were vital in the functioning and logistics of the fur industry and in turn in the history of Canada as a nation.

Throughout the 1800's the population in northwest Saskatchewan continued to grow. This was driven by immigration from areas further south, such as Red River. The immigration was triggered by a number of factors that included racist policies by the HBC and later exclusion of the Métis from settlement planning by both the HBC and government of Canada. Increased European immigration into Red river in the 1850's and 1860's and the later handing over by the HBC controlled Rupertsland to Canada saw the Métis effectively sidelined and forced from their land, despite their prominence in the area (by 1850 three quarters of Red River's 5000 inhabitants were Métis). This exclusion of Métis along with the forcible government suppression of Métis resistance, led to a dispersal of Métis populations north and west of Red River into Saskatchewan and Alberta (Sprague and Frye, 1983).

In the northern prairie provinces the Métis sustained themselves through traditional land uses such as hunting, fishing, trapping and an extensive land use system. They were entrenched in what is best described as a 'mixed economy'.

They used the bounty of the land for subsistence and traded the excess with other Métis, Indians and Europeans. Douaud (2007) describes the traditional northern Métis economy as being typified by the 'frontier industry' – nomadic enterprise based on *voyageur* work and harvesting natural resources. It was this evolution of the Métis and their close ties to this economy that meant a quick transition later on into a modern, sedentary economy (e.g. agriculture in the early 1900's) did not see them adapt well to this. In 1995 Valentine wrote that the Métis had never really been able to adjust to encroaching civilization and described them as, "…a group of people who have been reared in one pattern of living and must adjust to another" (pg 41). He also felt that they were a culture characterized by a history fraught with 'bad breaks'.

Métis survival, culture and identity were, and remain, closely tied to the land in northwest Saskatchewan. Tough *et al* (2002) along with other authors (including Tobias *et al* 1994, Shore and Barkwell, 1997) highlight the inherent importance of traditional land uses to the Métis as well as the Métis' expressed desire to maintain these traditional land uses. Tough *et al* (2002) also state that there has been little acknowledgment of the impact that industry (e.g. forest clear-cuts) has on the Métis and their land interests. This is in part due to the fact that in the past, Métis interests have been seen as subsidiary to First Nations. Because of their mixed ancestry, the Métis have historically been viewed as not purely aboriginal and have therefore had to fight for the recognition of their rights and control of their environment and resources. Douaud (2007) believes that the Métis have been 'forgotten'. Society has difficulty comprehending not only ethnic hybridity but also social and ideological overlaps and prefers clear-cut characteristic labels. Simply put, no-one really knows what side the Métis are on; they are the product of two mutually exclusive groups.

Métis do now have Aboriginal Rights under s.35 of the Constitution Act of 1982. However their relationship with government regarding land rights and the historic dispossession of Aboriginal title through Scrip, remains characterized by suspicion and conspiracy beliefs. While European settlers brought the Métis into the European economy, this contact also contributed to the Métis loss of land-base to the settler society. When fur trade areas (Rupertsland) previously held by the HBC were turned over to the Dominion of Canada in 1870 a system know as Scrip effectively left the Métis landless. The Dominion issued Scrip between 1885 and 1925 as a mechanism of dealing fairly with Métis people (Tough *et al*, 2002). Scrip was essentially a trade of Aboriginal status in return for a coupon that could be redeemed for a parcel of land or money. However, due to a convoluted system of assigning Scrip and due to fraud by land speculators who swindled Scrip land from the Métis for European settlement, there was very little acquisition of land by Métis (*.ibid*). Douaud (2007, pg 9) writes, "Thus it is that at the end of the 19th century the western Métis found themselves without land or status, rejected by the Whites, kept off the Indian Reserves, and deprived of their economic and cultural basis…".

This blight on Métis history left them landless and without Aboriginal rights and was the beginning of a long and ongoing battle to re-assert their rights and access to traditional lands, many of which are now used for resource extraction industries. Since the 1940's northwest Saskatchewan has been home to a number of large resource industries that were initiated to replace the fur and fishing industries and revitalize the economy (fur was suffering from non-Aboriginal over-harvest). Mining and forestry (large scale forestry starting in 1965) have been the main industries since then (Warnock, 2004) with increasing recent interest in energy resources in the north. Unfortunately many Métis feel that they have been sidelined by these industries and not received enough benefit from them while losing traditional lands and being burdened with the resulting environmental damages. Current problems include high rates of unemployment and reliance on government assistance – the very problem that the province wanted to relieve with its economic and land management changes in the 1930's and 1940's (O'Byrne, 2007). Many Métis believe that their future would be secured by land ownership which would make them less vulnerable to exploitation of the government land on which they now live (*ibid.*). Indeed this was a sentiment repeated by many during this study. In addition, the importance of tradition as a guiding principle for Métis is emphasized by Métis leader Harry Daniels, "If the Métis are to found effective organizations, these should have their roots in past traditions" (*ibid.* pg 16). The significant value of tradition as part of the unique Métis aboriginal identity and culture is a major focus of this thesis.

Research Purpose and Objectives

Using qualitative research techniques I will describe the perceptions and experiences of Métis research participants in regards to their relationship with local Boreal forest resources, and how these are influenced by and connected to local land policies and structures. While focusing on the perspectives of Métis participants, the responses of government employees (both Métis and non-Métis) are also included as a source of commentary on land use policy and planning.

Chapter 2: Paper #1 "Northwest Saskatchewan Métis and Boreal Forest Resource Use: Themes at the Nexus of Agency, Structure and Power", attends to broad land use themes that became evident from research. Using a set of 66 interviews (68 participants, 728 transcribed pages) from research participants and an additional 8 interviews (9 participants, 81 pages) from government personnel, the objective was to identify key themes that influenced changes in Métis land uses, changes in related cultural activities and how these changes affect Métis agency and manifest themselves in the communities.

Chapter 3: Paper #2 "Mediating Constructivism and Realism in Socio-Cultural Nature Values and Land Use Conflicts: Evidence from Métis Communities in Northwest Saskatchewan" attends to potential root causes of land use conflicts that were evident in the research. This paper addresses how the construction of socio-cultural values for nature among different cultural groups may contribute to a clash of values within different land use ideals. The objective was to flesh-out evidence from the 66 research interviews that would point towards the creation of local values that were artifacts not only of the social and cultural, but also a product of the biophysical.

The overall objective was to obtain a clear understanding of Métis opinion and perception of current land use activities in the region. To understand these perceptions this research addresses how the changes in land use influence Métis culture and social structure and how the role of cultural continuity within these communities is valuable for social resilience. I will address the role that socio-environmental values play in perceiving land use changes and address the value of tradition and historical influence. This study also attends to how Métis see themselves and their communities within the larger social landscape and the role they play in determining their position, how they interact with power holders and policy makers and how they would like to alter that relationship.

Theoretical Guidance

This research was initially influenced by studies that addressed environmental management and the role and effect this has on Aboriginal communities in Canada (including Nadasdy; 2003, 2007, Natcher *et* al; 2005 and Natcher and Davis; 2007). In addition, the history and contemporary narrative of Canadian Métis relationships with the land (Shore and Barkwell, 1998) were interwoven with this broader Aboriginal research.

After field work, initial analysis and the coding of the interview data it became apparent that the theory of power relationships was an appropriate framework through which the land use conflicts and concerns of Métis could be orientated. The concepts of power introduced by Bachrach and Baratz (1975), Gaventa (1980) and Lukes (2005) that transcend simple plurality and coercion were of significant influence and a common thread through both papers. These 'second' and 'third' dimensions of power enable an explanation of how actors, such as the Métis, can continue to feel distrusted, marginalized and dominated in respect to their influence over, and use of their local forest resources. Despite clear advantages that favor the Métis, such as their legal rights and the institutional mandate of government and corporations to acknowledge their concerns and needs, many perceive themselves as the victims of those in power. It is this theory of covert, unacknowledged, 'capillary' power or the 'non-use' of power that helps in guiding the social relations that work to create these perceptions. Dowding (2006, pg 136) describes this more abstract but prevalent exercise of power as allowing us to "…predict and explain others' behavior in ways that those agents may not recognize. It denies agents' privileged access to their own reasons for actions…We can also make distinctions between those who dominate knowingly and those who dominate without realizing they do so."

The fleshing out of substantial Métis traditional land use and environmental governance themes from the research interviews provided impetus to refine the theoretical guidance. Although I was studying traditional land uses and Métis involvement in local forest policy it is difficult to divorce these subjects from notions of agency. Cultural continuity and traditions, in this case land use, are inextricably linked with levels of agency. The first paper employs theory that attends concurrently to the relationships between tradition and agency (Otto and Pedersen, 2005) as well as more typical definitions of agency (Giddens, 1984). I explored these Métis land use and forest management themes through a tradition and agency dialectic. The implementation of agency also invites the inclusion of structural theory. Considering the initial influence of power relations, I used agency– structure theory as a guide to how power relations play out in this research context with the themes addressing land use and forest management as the tangible attributes and effects of these power relations, and as focus points for Métis resistance and concern.

A further theoretical refinement came in the second paper with the exploration of the potential roots of the pervasive land use conflicts between Métis and land management authorities in the region. Embedded in the major themes were implicit clashes in values and beliefs that underpinned much of the land use conflict. I was guided by the question that if power relations remain a core issue for the Métis then what is it that influences this power that shapes the current social structures and affects Métis through their physical land use and their capacity in land use planning? I approached this from the standpoint of differing and opposing values and beliefs between many of the Métis land users and those in governing, corporate or elite positions.

To frame this I chose to use mediation between two often opposing theories in social science, Social Constructivism and Realism. This theoretical problem and the role of each approach in the formation of societal or cultural values for Nature have been addressed by Soper (1995), Stedman (2003) and Carolan (2006). I chose to use a theoretical orientation that could be described as an 'artefactual constructivism' (Sutton, 2004). This implies that values for nature are social constructions but they are not solely social facts – they are significantly influenced by real world physical attributes that surround, or have played a role in people's lives or culture. Using attributes stressed by Macnaghten and Urry (1998) that elicit these 'artefactual constructions' I explored this concept as a root of land use conflict and source of difference in values and beliefs that create competing value sets and thus power hierarchies, as one set of values influences policy and procedure over the other.

Significance and Contributions of Research

A substantial body of literature attends to the history and ethnogenesis of the Métis in Canada, especially in the Métis cultural heartland of Southern Manitoba province. A small body of work focuses on Northwest Saskatchewan. However, on the topic of current land use and environmental policy conditions for Métis in NW Saskatchewan, there is very little indeed. Tough *et al* (2002, pg 26) write that, "…a lack of Métis-specific academic and applied research limits out understanding of the impact of industrial development on the use of land and resources by Métis communities" and add "Métis communities in northern Saskatchewan are still very dependant on forest resources" (pg 41).

It is hoped that this research can contribute to the paucity of literature on this topic, both in terms of contemporary Métis research and the case study application of social science theories. In addition, this study will be beneficial to land use decision makers, social scientists interested in the Métis, Aboriginal topics and land use changes, and most importantly the Métis communities in NW Saskatchewan. As forestry is a major industry in the region these results will be an important component of influencing socially responsible practices and re-evaluating current policy that is directed at involving and acknowledging the Métis in forest management. As the Saskatchewan Provincial Government plays a pivotal role in permitting industrial forest activity in the region, these results will also serve to highlight the Métis perceptions' of their policies and the resistance to them. Given that other resource industries, such as oil and gas, are showing potential for significant growth in the region, these results may be timely indeed.

Land use change and the contestation or promotion of this change by different sets of actors is an important area of study in rural sociology (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998). This becomes all the more so where actors are of Native heritage or Aboriginal title. The loss and change in traditions and cultural continuity by industrial activity has been shown to have adverse affects on Aboriginal and traditional communities (Chandler and Lalonde, 1998 and Slowey, 2001).

Evidence also shows that landscape change and environmental degradation influences societal and cultural health (Macnaghten and Urry, 1998). The examination of traditional Métis perceptions, values and sense of self efficacy in the face of change will contribute to the existing pool of research on Aboriginal people in Canada. Métis have perhaps been in 'limbo' within this field of research due to their unclear position as 'not quite native' and having unclear identity and rights as opposed to other Aboriginal people like First Nations and Inuit (Sawchuck, 1998).

I also hope that this research will benefit the people and communities who participated. Many participants' had the opportunity to express themselves about issues which they feel they normally cannot in public fora or about issues that they feel are overridden by government or corporate momentum which renders their voice ineffective. I hope these findings can provide a mirror for the participants' and institutions involved with which to re-evaluate policy that marginalizes certain values, knowledge and people.

Methods

This case study adopted a qualitative, interview based approach to collecting data and information. The interpretive nature of this research method was applicable to this type of study and appropriate for eliciting the type of detailed and descriptive narrative that allowed me to make inferences from the data and locate it within social theory frameworks. The ontological supposition is that it is Métis participants' experiences, histories, opinions, interpretations and knowledge that are the meaningful properties. Epistemologically the best way to generate data from these properties is to interact and capture this essence through interviews (Mason, 2002). Marshall and Rossman (1999) support the philosophy of this approach in social research and offer salient points that underpin its applicability within a case study of this nature. These include the inherent intepretivism, the interactive and humanistic research approach and the focus on emergent trends rather than tightly prefigured hypotheses.

The heuristic nature of this method, both during the interview and analysis processes, serves to illuminate trends, themes and previously unknown or unexpected phenomena from the participant data (Merriam, 1998). Through iteration of enquiry and analysis the researcher develops a deeper understanding and concept of the greater landscape and social-scape of enquiry.

The semi-structured interview allows the researcher to focus the interview questions on the scope of the research topic, in this case Métis land use, forestry and land use policy, while giving the researcher room to be creative. The researcher can probe certain responses and encourage momentum on particular topics that the respondent has obvious experience with, or knowledge and opinions on. The participant is thus encouraged to answer questions as honestly, openly and creatively as possible. This reflexivity in the interview process enables the researcher to hone their interview questions and local knowledge of topics with each progressive interview and contributes to the heuristic knowledge building during the process.

It is important to emphasize that the unit of analysis for this study was a large portion of the Northwest region of Saskatchewan province (see Appendix A). The area extends north of Meadow Lake (54° N) as far north as Lake Athabasca (59° N), west of the Alberta provincial boundary and as far east as La Ronge (104° W). The purpose was not to provide a comparative analysis between the different communities. The different communities were chosen to be broadly representative of the region. Most were communities that had been selected in previous exploratory rounds of research and others were added (and some omitted) based on identification of suitable and willing research participants who were considered to be residents of the region, regardless of their specific communities.

There were indeed slight differences and nuances in response trends between the different communities but not enough to significantly affect the themes and responses that were relevant to the research questions in this thesis. Most of these slight differences in responses to questions appeared to be based on community size, location relative to major roadways and most importantly, proximity to active forestry operations and other industry. However, it should be noted that the themes highlighted in this thesis relative to forestry were prevalent in all the communities visited. The difference is that in those more proximal to large forestry areas or with more involvement with forestry the opinions tended to be stronger and the overall percentage of participants with strong opinions was slightly higher than those more removed from major forestry activity.

There were no discernable, significant differences in participant responses that can be interpreted though or predicted by geographical patterns such as north-south or east-west gradients.

Interview participants were sampled both purposively and with a snowball technique. Purposive sampling was conducted through appointed community liaisons. Participants who were purposively selected were those who had experience with forestry, land use policies and natural resource planning, traditional land users such as trappers, hunters, fisher-people and also elders or those with significant histories of interaction with the land. Where possible it was endeavored to be as age and gender representative as possible. Community liaisons were contacted ahead of the interview field work and asked to provide the names and numbers of people who they felt would like to participate. They also tried, where possible, to pre-schedule interviews, although this was found to be an ineffective approach in the communities. Once in the region we used the offices of local Métis community organizations as research bases. These locally well known locations in Ille-a-la- Crosse and Buffalo Narrows were open to us to use as interview venues and were also an invaluable space for meeting potential research participants from those and other communities who came in and out randomly during the day, and were introduced to the research team by the liaisons.

Interviews were also conducted at people's homes or work places if they so desired or in public spaces such as Métis gatherings or simply under a tree in a quite space. The issue of neutral or participant preferred space was important in the interview set-up. By allowing people to choose a space of their choice it was hoped that they would feel more comfortable and at ease and be able to answer the questions more honestly and in-depth without feeling pressured or awkward.

The value of 'random meetings' and *in situ* introductions by the liaisons cannot be understated. I attempted to schedule interviews weeks in advance of the community visits and found this to be, for all intents and purposes, completely ineffective. The diverse lifestyles, frequent time spent outdoors and location of some people in and around these communities makes it difficult to get in contact with them via phone and even more unlikely to get a firm date for an interview. Another issue was that of trust. Some potential participants that I phoned before-hand seemed reluctant to engage with some unknown, invisible university researcher who was hundreds of kilometers away and they sounded uncomfortable with the idea.

Also invaluable was the use of a snowball technique to enlist other participants. Interview participants were asked if they knew of anyone who may be interested in participating in the study or may have valuable information or experience regarding the scope of the study. Typically people were quite eager to assist, often personally setting up the contact either by phone or in person.

All interviews and research notes were kept confidential. Participants were asked to sign a consent form after the content of the form was explained to them, and were given the opportunity to read it. It was explained that the interviews were recorded unless they did not approve, that their names would not appear on any research documents if they so wished and their names would be excluded from any research outputs unless they requested that their names be included. It was emphasized that answering questions was voluntary and they could defer or stop the interview at any time. Human ethics guidelines were followed according to Canadian Tri-Council Ethics guidelines, with approvals given by Métis community leaders, Métis research partners, and the University of Alberta. Interview data were held only by authorized members of the research team and were kept under lock and key.

Trustworthiness and Validity of Findings and Interpretation

Trustworthiness of the interview data results was ensured through a number of steps throughout the study. Firstly, the transcribed interviews from the 2005 field work were analyzed and coded by myself and a research colleague. From this we were already able to identify the main concerns, perceptions and themes within the study region from these interviews, and structure the next iteration of interview field work and analysis accordingly (remaining reflexive and open to changes).

Secondly, during the interview process any major issue that was highlighted by respondents could be anonymously 'tested' in subsequent interviews. Using the semi-structured interview method we were able to probe participants about information we had recorded in previous interviews (this was kept confidential, no names ever being mentioned). In so doing major themes could be heuristically validated by other participants through a member-check approach, with information and themes being solidified during the interview process.

Thirdly, analyzing and coding the interviews through multiple iterations of reading the transcripts facilitated the 'fleshing out' of the recurring themes that saturated the interviews. Pertinent information was inventoried and a count of it's percentage of occurrence in the interview set was ascertained in order to ensure that different themes and Métis perceptions were in fact representative and not anomaly. In addition I worked with a research colleague on this study since January 2006.We conducted field work together and were responsible for each coding half the interview transcripts. Throughout the process it was thus possible to validate findings by cross-checking them with my colleague who was also intimately familiar with the interviews.

Lastly, findings from this study were presented on a number of occasions at meetings and conferences to both members of the NW Saskatchewan Métis community and to members of the Community University Research Alliance who were familiar with the research project and the Métis of NW Saskatchewan. These findings were not challenged in terms of their truth-value or trustworthiness on any of these occasions. On the 27/28 March 2008, in accordance with the research conditions, community meetings were scheduled in the study region in order to provide Métis community members with feedback of the results. Although the audience was smaller than intended, the findings from this research project and this thesis were well received by both community members and local Métis leaders. No challenge was offered to the truthfulness or interpretation of the research findings.

Limitations and Pitfalls of the Research

This research has several potential limitations. Firstly I have dealt with research participants as Métis in general. I recognize and acknowledge that the Métis are not necessarily a homogenous group of people with identical opinions and experiences. I am aware that ethnography needs to be cautions of treating the 'other' as a unified and monolithic social group. My approach to this was however that the Métis do have a specific culture and identity and local leaders as well as participants themselves refer to the Métis a group on most levels despite obvious difference between individuals or groups within Métis communities and organizations.

The nature of interviewing and the presence of the interviewer may result in participants being suspicious or wary of answering certain questions honestly or fully. Where possible I was careful to confidentially cross-check certain points with other interview participants to ascertain their internal validity by triangulating with other research participants. This technique is supported by Creswell (1998) and was found to be useful by den Otter (1999). Using interviews as a research instrument typically limits the sample size used in a study of this duration. The benefit is however the level of description and detail that is provided. It is possible that the research team unintendedly omitted participants' with widely differing views by not encountering them in a relatively small sample (n =68, interviews = 71. Two interviews were with pairs of participants).

Willingness to participate could also have been a factor that precluded certain potential participants. Some people declined interviews on the basis that they 'didn't know enough', 'were too busy' or 'had been interviewed before'. For some there were initial negative impressions of the research; that the study was affiliated in some way to forest companies or political interests and they were suspicious of our motives. In addition some potential participants wanted to know who we had interviewed and who we were involved with locally (which we could ethically not divulge). Local and regional factions and feuds influenced these concerns and desire to participate. The sight of official consent forms and digital recorders also made some people initially wary and some asked before hand if it would be recorded or not.

The lower percentage (15/68) of women participants may be questioned as an imbalance in gender representation in this study. However it is important to acknowledge that the responses and common perceptions of the women participants did largely mirror those of the male respondents. In some cases the women participants did have a broader range of concerns, especially regarding the children and youth issues. It should also be noted that most of the interviews with women participants were typically detailed and rich with information and opinion.

This difference in gender responses did not affect the overall trends and themes highlighted in this research and remain representative of the broader Métis voices, both male and female, while attending to the research question. While in the field the researchers did endeavor to interview women as much as possible. However many of the contacts we were provided with and many of the land users we were introduced to by the community liaisons and through the snowball technique were male. On the whole the research teams met and were involved with more men than women while in the field. The reason for this may have to do with different movements by men and women in the communities or perhaps some women feeling that they had less of a stake in resource related issues (which some who were interviewed did tell us). This is contrary to the traditional role of Métis women in the region (Acco, 2001 and MacDougall, 2006) and the contemporary land use activities mentioned by some in interviews (women active in berry picking, medicinal plants harvests and processing of bush-foods like fish and meat).

Reflections on my Social Location

Although I have had no previous personal experience in NW Saskatchewan or previous interactions with these communities, I do have a background that I feel is relevant to this research. I am active in some of the outdoor activities under discussion such as hunting and fishing and have worked for a large forestry corporation. While I don't assume this to be all encompassing by any means, it enabled me to interact in conversation about these types of activities in an informed and inclusive way and helps me understand the concern behind issues as well as the essence and phenomena of the land use activities explained; albeit not from a Métis perspective. Having an education in conservation, geography and sociology I was probably seeking out the social essence of environmental interaction and believed I am well equipped to undertake research of this nature.

My identity as a white male may have been threatening to some people, although this is debatable. However as an 'outsider', both locally and in terms of nationality this may have reduced suspicions of my motives and personally history regarding the Métis. I was conscious of 'othering' people as an educated researcher and was conscious of not to claim knowledge or superiority of certain issues. I endeavored to remain as polite and overtly neutral on issues as possible (although of course researchers will harbor opinion and bias with interacting with people in this type of research).

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Chapter 2: Paper #1

"Northwest Saskatchewan Métis and Boreal Forest Resource Use: Themes at the Nexus of Agency, Structure and Power"

(Target Journal: Canadian Journal of Native Studies)

Introduction

There currently exists a critical dearth of literature on contemporary conditions for Métis people in Northwest Saskatchewan province. An important component of these conditions is the state of traditional resource and land use activities. Ironically, a prominent cultural feature of the Métis is their significant level of interaction with natural resources through activities such as trapping, fishing, hunting and the collecting of fuel wood, medicinal and edible plants. Historically, these land based activities were the core economy for the Métis in Canada (Pelletier, 1974; Sprenger, 1978, Tough, 1996 and Pannekoek, 1998). This reliance on resources remains evident in modern Métis communities in NW Saskatchewan, and traditional activities on the land remain culturally important to the Métis in NW Saskatchewan, and an important part of Métis identity (Tobias *et al*, 1994 and Adamowicz *et al,* 2004*).* Although these activities may be less financially important today, they remain a traditional channel with which to preserve culture, history and values, and serve as an important recreational outlet, involving social learning from elders to youth around social conduct, family interaction, subsistence skills, knowledge of the land, and maintenance of spiritual connections to the land.

Background

Approximately 48 100 (Statistics Canada, 2007) Métis people live in Saskatchewan[1], with approximately 6000 in the northwest region (Statistics Canada, 2001). Métis are known as descendants from mixed European and Aboriginal lineages with an ethno-genesis dating to the 1750's (Prefontaine, unknown) , and residents in this region since the Métis settlement of Ile a la Crosse was established in 1776 (MacDougal, 2006). Northwest Saskatchewan has had a history of fluctuating and often contentious industrial resource development. Along with mining and recent oil exploration, forestry has been a major resource industry, with large scale operations beginning in earnest in 1965 (Warnock, 2004). This paper attends to current forest policy and management structures that date from 1990. Community respondents in this study are all within or adjacent to the 3.3 million ha Forest Management Agreement (FMA) area of the industrial forestry company Mistik Management. Mistik is the land management company that is responsible for cooperative forest management planning with Métis communities through an existing set of 9 co-management boards (Mistik Management, 2006).

Several scholars have briefly stated that Métis' people have marginally benefited from such development, and echoing Lyman (1984), they conclude that industrialization has undermined traditional activities in the region. Burgeoning industrial forestry has brought significant change to the nature of Métis forest use and access (Dosman *et al,* 2001; Haener *et al,* 2001 and Adamowicz *et al,* 2004). In the recent past there has been full scale protest from Métis communities who were angered by the scale and nature of development of forestry in the region (Beckley and Korber, 1996). This is in addition to more recent lifestyle changes where Métis have become more sedentary, less active on the land-base and more entrenched in a wage-labor economy, often within the space of one generation[2].

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[1] The Métis Nation of Saskatchewan estimates that this figure may be as high as 80 000 (Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan, 2006).

Public consultation and promotion of 9 local co-management boards (and 17 stake holder groups) has been supported by Mistik management in the area since 1990 (Beckley and Korber, 1996). Mistik is mandated to manage the FMA area for NorSask Forest Products and Meadow Lake Mechanical Pulp Inc and ensure fiber supply to their mills in Meadow Lake, while ensuring sound and equitable relationships with local communities through consultation and co-management. In the summary of the 20 year Integrated Forest Management Plan, Mistik Management (1996) make clear reference to their priority to integrate Northern communities and traditional knowledge into their management mandate. The plan calls for attention to diverse 'forest values' that attend to a range of social needs, over and above those of timber, fiber and profit. Similarly, the 1995 Partnership Agreement between the Government of Saskatchewan and the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan states as clear objectives, "Métis involvement and priorities regarding forestry. Participation in Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management's (SERM) Multi-Stakeholder Forum and other mechanisms that facilitate Métis Nation consultation". The government (who allocates commercial harvests) has a, "…duty to consult and, if appropriate, accommodate if the actions contemplated by government could adversely affect First Nation or Métis rights" (Report on Saskatchewan's Provincial Forests, 2007 pp 16). While government policy requiring consultation and co-management is to be expected, Beckley and Korber (1996) reported that in this case industry initiated the process without legal incentive, demonstrating positive, proactive efforts to facilitate co-existence of forestry activities near Métis communities.

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[2] See Valentine (1955) and Shore and Barkwell (1998). Reference is made to Métis movement into larger communities and increased reliance on wage employment and more urbanized life-styles.

Theoretical Orientation

The importance associated with being competent at resource harvest is highlighted in a number of Métis history and anthropology texts, (Valentine, 1955 and Shore and Barkwell, 1998). A strong case can be made for Métis cultural agency as having a solid foundation in the relationship to, and use of natural products, and that these traditions have significant influence on Métis ideas, values and beliefs. Robert Redfield (1953) coined the term *Style of Life* to describe culture as more than the sum of its institutions but to include the importance of 'intangibles' that guide behavior and action. Land use is a primary element in Métis *Style of Life* and these actions and behaviors are crucial to their levels of agency within their communities and society.

For the sake of clarity it is necessary to expand on the reasoning behind the focus on agency, as well as the links between tradition, identity, culture and agency. In this paper the definition of agency will be that used by Ahern (2001; pp112), that agency is "…the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act". This definition is also guided by Giddens (1984, pp 9), "Agency refers not only to the intentions people have in doing things but to their capability of doing those things in the first place". Hitlin and Elder (2007a) refer to agency as capacity for self-efficacy and influence within socially structured opportunities, in other words capacity within what Betts (1986, pp 40) would call "contextual constraints and opportunities, rules and resources". Agency is not an abstract, 'quasi-mystical' property. It works through structural precedents that shape opportunity (Hitlin and Elder, *.ibid* a). Taking cue from Métis cultural history it is the aim here to incorporate traditional land uses as a structure of opportunity that serves as a vehicle for agency.

The challenge is to extend agency from an individualistic trait to a shared socio-cultural characteristic. Blumer's (2004) thesis of 'individual acts as social acts' forms a basis for this theoretical extension, where cultural traditions (such as those of Métis land use) serve as a distinct cultural manifestation of self-efficacy in the past, and as a manifestation of agency. Traditions can be a useful way of binding a society, serving as repeated, perceptible events, and activities and symbols that structure a culture and affirm its functions to cultural continuity (Otto and Pedersen, 2005). Within the agency –structure dialectic, actors produce culture through tradition, and culture in turn, shapes actors. Thus the objectification, enactment and continuity of tradition requires conscious agency and discursive attention, shaped by tacitly held cultural knowledge. On the role of tradition, Otto and Pedersen (*.ibid*, pp35/6) write, "…traditions can and should be analyzed as resources for the attainment of particular, individual or collective goals…these goals can have a clear political character…for example securing access to land as the basis for livelihood". Literature cited suggests that Métis identity is strongly shaped by a culture with traditions of natural resource use, and Métis in Canada hold entitlement to a legal-rational Aboriginal identity. On identity Hitlin and Elder (2007b, pp180) write, "The successful achievement of an identity…takes effort and defines ourselves as agents". It is therefore possible that for a culture with an identity shaped by a strong influence of natural resource use traditions, understanding the position of these traditions as a vehicle for a cultural agency is important inference for understanding social change in Métis communities.

This paper reports findings from recent semi-structured interviews with Métis residents in NW Saskatchewan about the continuance of Métis traditional activities and the changing conditions of natural resource use and access to land. Four recurring themes are connected to both land use changes due to industrial forest use and related changes in regional Métis lifestyle. Each theme is related to a theoretical framework that addresses agency, structure and power and how this interpretation may inform further policy approaches and understanding for Métis cultural continuity in Northwest Saskatchewan.

These themes address perceptions of their ability to effectively influence environmental decision making, land use development, and their current ability, both physically and socially, to engage with traditional and 'heritage' natural resources in the Boreal forest. The importance of reporting these findings is borne out of the current dearth of natural-resource centered research that is focused on Métis communities in NW Saskatchewan. The challenge, not unique to Métis people but germane for future policy making in a region without an existing Métis land claim and that has increasing land use competition, is to engage in policy discussions that address the question of Métis agency, cultural well being and the role of current land management authorities to respond to Métis interests.

Research Methods

Field research took place in Northwest Saskatchewan, Canada during the summers of 2005 and 2006. Nine predominantly Métis communities were visited by researchers and respondents were identified through local Métis community liaisons. The respondents were selected on the basis of experience with natural resources through use, management or employment. A total sixty eight semi-structured participants were interviewed by research teams the summers of 2005 and 2006. Respondents typically comprised trappers, commercial fishermen, active hunters, forestry workers and elders. From these purposively sampled respondents, a 'snowball' approach identified other likely research respondents, where participants were asked to suggest someone who had a different experience, or set of opinions, than their own. In purposively sampling respondents, researchers were conscious to try and be as gender representative as possible and included youth members (ethical requirements precluded respondents under 18). These interviews include six government employees in the region (employed in the resource management field). In the spring of 2007 a further 9 higher level government employees were interviewed in connection with policies and regional resource management. The approach to the research was a collective case study (Stake, 1995) with the unit of analysis being the region represented by nine communtites. The questions asked were focused on natural and forest resources and their use within these communities. Most interviews lasted 30 mins to two hours, and were held in government offices, respondents' living rooms, and other public facilities.

Completed interviews were transcribed in 809 pages, and then coded with NVIVO software, adopting a 'start codes' approach (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Initial open codes were employed and these codes were then refined and divided into a tree code system; data were coded in an iterative set of stages, similar to Creswell's (1998) approach to place excerpts of interviews in initial codes and then, after reviewing relevant literature, more thoroughly analyze the data to verify coding and recode into larger recurring themes. Quotes selected are illustrative of the repetitive themes that were highlighted with each round of coding and analysis.

Findings and Themes.

1) Consultation and Co-Management

"…you sit down with Mistik Management and it seems like the answer we get is a good answer. But it's not really what's happening. What they're saying is not really what they're doing." – Interviewee, 2006.

The majority of respondents held strong opinions about involvement in co-management and Métis consultation for land management practices in the region (48 of 66 interviews - 31 made strong comments regarding, and 17 made references to co-management and consultation). In uncovering these concerns this theme needs attention as two clear sub themes. First, there were concerns about consultation and co-management at an institutional level, where industrial and government representatives were perceived to have undue influence on the scope of possibilities for Métis traditional activities and participation in economic activities associated with industrial forestry. Secondly, respondents noted the role of the internal divisions in perpetuating inequities experienced by some families or individuals who were not "in power" at the time, women, and across communities, where some were considered to have the connections with powerful forestry decision-makers, and others were left out of forestry decision-making and benefits associated with that position. Both of these sub-themes resonate a larger theme of lack of broad Métis voices in forestry development in the region, and rather than being autonomous, influence each other.

Institutional Level

During interviews, statements such as the following two were common when respondents

were talking about consultation and co-management between themselves as part of Métis communities and the authorities:

> We got what they called a co-management board, we used to have a say in where they cut, how they cut, and when they cut. But many things slip through the cracks and are not consulted…

> They [Mistik] formed a resource management board, which are better known as co-management boards, but that's- it's just a title. Basically, it's just Mistik Management who comes in and tells you, "Well, these are the maps; these are our cutting maps for the next three years." [laughs]…you don't really have any say because they represent the government who has signed their documents and have backed them up and have, basically, given them all the rights to harvest.

This dissonance with institutional level consultation has been reported by Sherry and Myers (2002), Nadasday (2003), Natcher *et al* (2005) and Natcher and Davis (2006), who report that while the process policy often appears to promote authentic negotiation of interests, Aboriginal participants seldom set the agenda for decision-making . The outcomes of the consultation process often assume the desires of the commercial interest, and given the pro-development stances of government, much of the research on consultation and co-management suggests Aboriginal partners see co-management as an extension of government administration (Natcher and Davis, 2006), and corporate will.

Secondly, outcomes favorable to the industry are related to the managerial processes that structure the consultation process, and legitimize certain knowledge and values that each group brings to the table. Nadasdy (2003) and Natcher *et al* (2005), for example, argue that resource management protocols for co-management favors forestry science and other standard commercial forestry approaches to forest management, thereby legitimizing one type of knowledge as more factual and applicable than other kinds of knowledge, such as traditional knowledge, which is seen as co-option. Natcher *et al* (2005) describe aboriginal knowledge as often lacking a 'discourse of empirical truth' and appearing to be anecdotal in comparison to modern managerialism, thereby becoming easily subjugated within the knowledge sharing process, and eluded to in this quote below:

> But over the years, [over] a few generations, our people have become accustomed to saying, "This is our land, and we will look after our land. We'll regulate the hunting, the fishing and what comes out of that land." No one has to write it. It doesn't have to be written. It's just something that we know how to do and it's in you because it's passed on to you. And this is how they [our people] survived. But that's not how government works...They don't rely on the traditional knowledge of our people. It doesn't mean anything.

Respondents often asserted that government decision-makers do not see Métis as potential resource managers. Although some believe they have the ability and knowledge to choose what is best for their local resources, many respondents remarked about the lack of locally based technical education and managerial skills. The lack of formal educational opportunities in these areas thereby prevents them from exhibiting competence in the eyes of government or management corporations. The following quotes from three different respondents highlight this concern about local Métis lacking expertise that would cultivate more formal training, resource management respect and reduce their reliance on external consultants and authorities:

> …We've [been] met with indifference, probably because they don't have any confidence in our ability to manage and to do things.

> We have to go by the word of an outsider that tells us, "Well, yeah, your water's still safe. You can drink it," or "No, you can't drink it. You got to boil it or--" we don't have our own people to do that.

> They'd rather listen to a 25 year old student that's fresh out of the University who's now a fish biologist, you know they'd go listen to him first, before they'd listen to an elder who's seen things happen over 50 to 60 years…I don't believe that we as stewards of the land, the Métis people – that the advice we give the government is listened to.

Agency is thereby reduced by these feelings of inadequacy or risk of embarrassment, as this respondent expressed:

> …maybe they [Métis] do know but they're too afraid to ask because they don't have enough education to uh, say the right words, or try to bring it out; people will shoot them down and tell them, "Why are you talking and you don't have no education?" like, they'll shoot them down that way. So that's why a lot of people don't come out and speak.

Natcher and Davis (2006) and Sherry and Myers (2002) echo these statements, writing that in other Aboriginal resource co-management and consultation case studies the lack of technical and administration expertise as well as a paucity of local resource management professionals has been a key barrier to local engagement in forestry decision-making, and ultimately weakens any confidence existing resource management authorities may have in devolving further forestry decision-making to Métis or Aboriginal groups. Métis research respondents expressed frustration with these inequities,

> We've [Métis] always managed our resources...We can prove to them [authorities] that that these people manage their own resources; let us be.

Community Level and Internal Divisions

Internal division and factions within communities became evident during research. Beckley and Korber (1996, pg16) noted this from their work in the same region writing that, "Native communities…often have feuding factions that divide them." When probed, respondents would readily admit that internal divisions inhibited their willingness to attend consultation meetings or be proponents of local resource co-management boards. Most often mentioned were cliques within the community, e.g. local Métis elites, particularly businessmen who were involved in the forestry sector and who tend to dominate co-management boards or public meetings because of their position. Disillusioned with democratic processes in their own community, many respondents expressed apathy, frustration or fear of recrimination. The following statements by respondents describe this:

> Mostly the people that go [to consultation meetings] are people that are looking for their livelihood in forestry… I don't think there is enough people that are coming out

> that are concerned, you know? And so, when they set up meetings, the main people that go are people that are in the forest industry.

> …and sometimes people are reluctant to go to the public forum because it's the same people that are always getting the attention, I guess, in regards to some of the issues they feel are relevant to them. And people are reluctant to speak out because they don't want to be called down more in a public forum.

Slowey (2001) also suggests that internal divisions in Aboriginal communities are commonplace, and are a significant hindrance to corporate partnerships and capacity to protect local traditional land use and land access. She writes of local business and political elites who have strong relationships with corporate resource interests and in so doing sway local politics to maintain a *status quo* that favors their or their group or families' interests. Respondents often mentioned how they felt swindled by local politicians or businesspeople and that to be heard or assert any knowledge and input in the consultation processes, one needed to side with, or be an insider with these groups, for example. These respondents shared this:

> A: People are jealous over anybody that's making a little bit.
>
> Q: It's not the first time I've heard that, either.
>
> A: But if you're on the mayor's side, you know, you get it for cheaper. And it all comes back to politics, decision makers.

> Q: So that kinship thing: you're either in or you're out. Your family sort of--
>
> A: Exactly, exactly. I mean, it all depends on-- it's not how smart you are in the north. It's how big your family is. That's what it is. It all comes down to that.

> There's a lot of nepotism. It's, plain and simple. You know that's what it is. It's pure nepotism. People get into positions to gain for their own families and themselves.

Gender divisions are an extension of these natural resource management related divisions within communities. Some of the 15 women interviewed felt excluded from consultation meetings, co-management boards, or community organizations focused on resource and forest management. These two respondents sum up many women's statements regarding their involvement:

> I do take part in community gatherings and stuff but not forestry or anything like that. I haven't gone to any of the meetings; mostly guys go there so you're not really comfortable…it's a guy thing. I'm kind of intimidated when we go there.
>
> I: Would you like to take part in that sometimes?
>
> R: Mm, sometimes I would, sometimes I can, they see the dollar signs but they don't see the hurting signs.
>
> I: Do you think it would be more effective if there were some women involved?
>
> R: I think so. Because women can do a lot of things, if they were only listened to and given the time to be heard…No, like for me I wouldn't go to a forestry meeting 'cause I'm not part of the forestry' whatever? Like the logging or whatever…because I'm not really aware of what goes on there, I wouldn't just go there because there was a meeting.

> Q: Have you ever attempted to address your concerns about the health of the forest and how it fits in overall community well-being?
>
> A: I have, yes. A lot of times I've brought it up, but I'm the only woman in a council of seven men, and so it's kind of hard for one woman to have a voice. I just feel like I'm, you know, nobody's listening to me…so you could tell I wasn't even heard.

MacDougall (2006) writes that historically, Métis communities in the region (she writes specifically of Ile a la Crosse) were driven by matriarchal family networks. While their role was not as overt as that of the men, these female centered family networks enabled institutions such as the Hudson's Bay Company and North-West Company to use male labor that was supported by women. Acco (2001) supports this, stating that traditionally, Métis women in Saskatchewan have played a key role in communal and social decision making and have held sway over the character of social life. Male dominated decision-making in forestry in the region may possibly contribute to the erosion of traditions where women play a stronger role in decision-making in general.

The internal divisions also appear to diminish Métis trust that further education and training in forestry within communities would necessarily support traditional forest activities, such as hunting, fishing, and small scale sawmill forestry. While not a sentiment shared by many, some respondents expressed concern that once local Métis people became resource management professionals (e.g. Conservation Officers) they would 'turn' on local resource harvesters and use their authority and education against their own people. Others asserted that if some of their community members became foresters, for example, others would feel jealousy and not support their local efforts. This respondent attends to both sides of this dividing issue:

> …and now we're Native SERM (Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management) conservation officers. They're Native but they're "Red Apples", you know what I mean when I say Red Apples? And it's not good, they should be working with the people finding

out the concerns and stuff which is what they're trained for... but once they're in there it's a different story, they just fall under the, "oh we've got a good job now we're okay for the rest of our lives". That's what seems to be happening here. And that's no good.

Q: Do you think it's difficult for them being Native and then taking on a job with the government; do you think they feel torn?

A: ...it is hard as a Native person to have that training and there's always that power struggle...you think you're better than them [other Métis].

2) Environmental Change and Degradation

Many Métis Elders are strong believers in the traditional Métis conservation ethic and connection with the land that supports their traditions, diets and social activities (Shore and Barkwell, 1998). Acco (2001, pp 130) describes it as, "Respect for the land and that which lives on the land is deeply ingrained in the Métis". This sentiment was echoed repeatedly during research with almost all the respondents (54 out 66 interviews) stating that the local environment and its health are of great concern to them and of use to them for activities ranging from recreation, to education to healthy traditional food. Furthermore, they reported that environmental changes from forestry cut-blocks, pollution and other industrial development like mining were threatening their ability to use the local resources as well their agency as traditional land users and their ability to influence future land decisions. Adamowicz *et al* (2004) concur that forestry development in the region has had a negative impact on traditional land uses. The following quotes capture what many respondents felt about changes and what they felt constituted degradation to the regional environment:

> (*When asked what he saw as a major local threat*) Oh, the health of the environment in total. I mean, I think we are stewards, all of us, of the land. And if we don't look after it, who's going to look after us? We give money to multinationals to rape our resources and leave all their garbage and then we have to go clean it up.

> The biggest change would be just the clear cuts, for me, yeah. There's too many of them. And, [long pause] yeah, I really think about it, you know.

> Logging for sure hurts your livelihood you know…now its all clear cutting and that's what really hurts I think.

Most of the concern was leveled at the loss of forest productivity due to cut-block damage, such as the damage done to trap-lines, reduced moose(*Alces alces*) numbers (their favored meat), and damage to under-story plants such as berries and medicinal plants.

> Even the moose areas, the moose-hunting areas – moose like living in old growth and that's all Mistik cuts is old growth and that's where all the moose are.

> Well, I mean, they're cutting down our forests, and our berries, and you know, mushrooms and whatever people eat for their livelihood…

This issue was also confirmed by a third party SERM employee during an interview. When asked about this the problem of cut blocks affecting the Métis community's access to, and quality of forest products the respondent replied:

> …I hear it over the coffee table, because I deal with foresters, and I deal with their concerns, I deal with conservation officers, and that's the talk to over the table.

In addition, concerns were also leveled at other externalities of resource development such as pollution, the role of deforestation in global warming, and the negative impacts of erosion and sedimentation on local fisheries. Aesthetic changes in the landscape were also interpreted by some respondents as environmental degradation, and it made many residents suspicious about the quality of the environment after resource development, as alluded to by this respondent:

> …it's not the same anymore, it'll never be the same you know. You go on the boat, drive along the shore and the land you see is bare now… forestry over there will be a different kind of tree, even though they are really planted, the forests will come back but it won't be the same trees.

Environmental damage and its effect on resource use and agency is similarly noted in the Northern Athabasca River Basin Study (ALPAC,1988) in Alberta. Métis participants in this study also assert that a decline in resource quality negatively affected their hunting, trapping and fishing. This effect was not only on the physical harvest but also on their trust in the safety what they harvest from the environment. Acco (2001) writes that landscape change around Cumberland House, SK has contributed to loss of traditional foods and access to harvest areas which in turn impacts the local Métis way of life and social well being.

Almost every respondent stated a concern over degradation and environmental change. There was, however, some difference of opinion but this only came from three local, self employed logging operators and one respondent who is a government employee and manages a local forest-fire protection base. These respondents felt that many locals were overly concerned and that logging did not pose long term threats to their agency as resource users but included current economic benefits that local Métis needed to capitalize on. The government employee is considered an elder and is well respected in the community and was highly recommended as a participant by other interviewees, based on his thorough local knowledge. He believes that many locals lack education about the forestry industry and pins this problem on both lack of overall formal education levels and, interestingly, on the loss of traditional land use and failure in the public consultation process to educate communities. He stated:

> Most of these people were never educated as to the reason why there is logging and it's an industry that people feed your families from, and also there's a renewal of forest that creates a healthier forest, and that animals tend to come back. It's just that people are misinformed; that's why you have such a negative painting on it.

In terms of those employed in logging, it would clear that they need to protect their livelihoods. However even amongst those employed in industrial forestry, a cognitive dissonance between occupation and tradition was at times clear, as highlighted by this respondent and his concern over the forestry related degradation, despite its financial benefit to him:

> Q: …even though you make your living off dragging logs, you would still rather see some conservation happening rather than just logging everything.
>
> A: Yes! Yeah. And it's better for me, like twenty years from now when my kids go in there and like, you know, it'll be, like those trees will be five feet, four feet high, you know. That doesn't work! If I could get out of it, I would.

3) Generation Gap and Loss of Traditional Land Use

"Well no-doubt we can benefit out of our traditional methods of living". Interview Respondent (2006).

Many of the respondents lamented the loss of traditional land use (TLU), environmental knowledge and stewardship within one generation (48 of 66 interviews - 29 had strong opinions in this regard, 19 commented on the issue). The problem highlighted by many is that younger Métis community members are not receiving the education and guidance focused on natural resources and that with a change in contemporary lifestyle the youth are focused on other interests, such as entertainment. Of course this socio-cultural change is not necessarily fundamentally negative and for many quite desirable. However, many respondents felt strongly that youth should be involved in some way in traditional Métis resource harvest and environmental knowledge sharing.

This generation gap affects the problem of agency in resource management as less Métis become active with their physical environment, and more removed from its management. Tradition is thwarted and knowledge that others have tried to represent as culturally and managerially significant to corporate or state managers, is diminished. The importance of socio-cultural continuity of resource use and familiarity is summarized by the following interview response:

> Well if we can keep our traditional resource base alive and can teach our children and grand children the Métis way that we were brought up by, I think we'll maintain the tradition, but if we ever lose that…you can see it already from my generation…not as many

> people are trapping as they used to, you see the same group of hunters every year, and a lot of them don't train their sons and daughters. That I think is the biggest threat, losing our way of life. We need people, and for many to teach our kids how we were brought up, teach them hands-on how to hunt, and fish, and how to live off the land...

Sherry and Myers (2002) also highlight the problem of waning TLU due to generation gaps and less dissemination of traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). However, they qualify this statement, and argue there are many instances TEK is not being lost but has changed in character and is hybridized with more 'westernized' knowledge. Reasons for this gap included time constraints and employment pressures that precluded sharing time on the land with younger people, and also the deterioration of social teachings received with each successive generation. One elder attributed this trend to the fact that many were taken 'off the land' due to government policies that encouraged sedentary settlements, and the propensity then to engage in wage labor. In addition he believed that loss of TEK was exacerbated by the residential school system[3], which discouraged use of native languages, and ignored traditional land uses as sources of learning and identity. In a few cases, parents dismissed the TEK loss and argued that it would no longer further the 'European' type education their children needed to succeed.

> I keep saying our youngsters are not learning that from their parents, there's no proper parenting skills so, I'm still learning now how to be a proper parent. It's something that

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[3] This issue was brought up by Métis community members during a Community University Research Alliance researchers meeting in Saskatoon, Canada in November 2007. The topic was introduced during discussion about loss of TLU; this unprompted occurrence certainly adds weight to its value as a factor within this theme.

> was taken away from us; it's a sad thing to say but it's true [referring to Residential Schools where parents were removed from culture and TLU and were removed from the cycle of inter-generational dissemination].

Métis historically managed land by traditional knowledge that was based on the nature of the resource and their resource harvest movements (Acco, 2001). The socio-environmental landscape maps that were created from this were passed on as part of a hunter, trapper, fisher or food collectors' education through traditions and stories (*ibid.*). The loss or rapid change of these movements and accompanying traditions means that the social education between generations was reduced, or stopped. It is these lost traditions and lack of social guidance to reinforce these in the face of rapid cultural change that elicits concern amongst research respondents, such as this:

> I wish that our people would learn that, we need to bring traditional land use back, so our kids can live off the land. Instead of always having technologies, like computers and everything like that…it's kind of difficult nowadays for children because there's so much technology, more than our culture needs and the technology is more in them [a part of their daily time].

> TV that's what's killing it [traditional knowledge]…if we didn't have TV what would the kids do? They'd do more, other activities.

Local schools do have cultural programs that they instituted to support traditional land use, and the related social well being. In light of some of the high-priority problems youth face in these communities (e.g. high levels of substance abuse and diabetes), local administrators and residents agree that disconnection with the land acts in part as a catalyst social problems, as this participant agrees:

> Q: And you did mention earlier that you think that some of the youth problems might be solved if they had a better connection to the environment?
>
> A: Yeah. I think so, I think the youth would really enjoy learning how to trap, learning how to fish, learning how to hunt, learning what you do with the berries, what you do with canning. I think it would all fit in all together. Because then it would teach them how to be respectful.

There are also other examples of residents identifying this need to maintain the flow of TLU and TEK to ensure social health and Métis agency with local resources, such as this participant:

> …and I'm out doing my part because…I take quite a few younger people out with me when I go hunting and that, and I try to show them the ways of the land.

An important effect that sound TLU plays is to quell the accusation of Métis abuse of resources (e.g. over hunting). Sherry and Myers (2002) acknowledge that loss of TLU in Aboriginal communities has been the cause of resource abuse and lack of respect for the land. These accusations affect Métis image and contribute to the aforementioned beliefs by resource managers that Aboriginal communities are poor land managers. Regarding this, these participants agreed:

> A: See the ones that are abusing hunting and fishing rights don't have the spiritual and traditional backgrounds.
>
> Q: And you think if they'd spend more time in the bush, as youth, that might teach them a bit of ethic and they might do less abuse?

> A: More respect. More, what's the word I can say, more, responsibility, more independence.

4) Wage Labor and Economic Constraints

Although not as overt as the other themes above, a number of respondents leveled concern at the growing challenge to balance formal wage employment with time spent on TLU (direct statements in 15 interviews and partial reference in 19). Sherry and Myers (2002) also emphasize that increasing focus on wage employment precludes time to pursue TLU activities, as these two respondents explain:

> You're living in both worlds you have to somehow make means out of those both worlds.

> We can touch upon what we know about the forest and gather what we need but today, in this lifestyle, it's like what I said, we need to accommodate our families. And we can't do it traditionally anymore.

A few attempt to balance wage labor with time on the land, such as this respondent:

> …a lot of people I know that work, they work around the town here but they go out on weekends, go camping, and you know, go fishing…they got log cabins.

The balancing of these activities certainly holds value for respondents who appear willing to pay for these TLU activities even in the face of increasing costs (equipment, fuel) and decreasing economic incentives such as higher overheads and declining or fickle markets for products like furs. The qualitative and social values that are placed on these traditions are significant, as this respondent (a Métis Conservation officer) highlighted:

> …the money isn't there but they still do that [manage trap-lines]…that's the way of life.

Later, this conservation office emphasized the costs to time in the bush,

> Q: …do you think there are any barriers or anything that stops Métis people from earning part of their livelihood from the bush?
>
> A: Well first off, just the price of gas to get out of town. And equipment, for example if they're gonna trap, there's the price of gas, there's the price of the equipment they need… by the time they get it all that paid for, and then try and go make a living trapping furs and selling them [they're losing financially].

Discussion – Agency, Structure and Power: The Social Triumvirate.

The Métis participants' initial concern over forestry cut-blocks and environmental degradation serve as an indicator for more complicated issues at the nexus of power and social structures. Loss in abundance and quality of environmental resources is an undeniable impedance to the continuity of Métis land use traditions. Métis participants feel unable to influence policy and practices that they feel are destroying culturally, economically and physically valuable resources. Interpretation of the findings through agency-structure and power theories is useful in uncovering the reasons why traditional activities and resources are being lost, despite Métis concern.

The participants' accounts point to the structural constraints, layered across time and space that interact with Métis agency. According to Hitlin and Elder (2007a), agency reflects an actor's structural capacity to shape the opportunities in which those actors may engage. In critique of Gidden's 'structuration' (i.e., that a structural constraint to agency can be turned into an opportunity by a reflexive actor), Hoggett (2001) and Hitlin and Elder (*ibid.*) believe that this overly simplistic model does not account for the presence of structural constraints that stifle agency and reproduce powerlessness like that implied by the responses above. Undesirable structures cannot always simply be reshaped, because of the underlying conditions that allow them to persist. Reflexive actors may not actually be aware of all their constraints. They may internalize and amplify their feelings of powerlessness due to repeated ineffective actions to exert agency and focus on issues that represent their loss of agency, such as traditions and land uses.

Structural dispossession is a product of what Holland *et al* (1998) term 'positional identities'. Positional identity describes an actor's position relative to their social surroundings, and how signals of subordination affect agency, perceptions of self-efficacy, and sense of entitlement. This identity happens heuristically, over the course of historic and ongoing agency-structure dialectics, and in day-to-day power relations that conform to the hierarchical *status quo*. This creation of positional identity permeates the interview excerpts, where Métis respondents imply a dispossession from their traditional ways, and structural barriers that limit their legitimacy in recent resource management ventures. Barriers included residential schooling, forced settlement patterns, racism, sub-standard educational opportunities, and loss of access to land that cumulatively work to define their perceived position in society.

The issue of knowledge plurality between Métis and the authorities indicates an awareness of positional identity. Respondents often referred to the Métis feeling out competed in consultation situations due to a lack of formal education and inability to engage in the discourse of scientific resource management. Intimacy with the discourse and knowledge of the authority exhibits competence in the eyes of power holders and allows for the exertion of agency and vertical mobility within power structures (Holland *et al,* 1998). This mobility determines positional identity and the level of constraint that actors encounter. The higher an actor's (or group's) position, the more privileged or included they become and the less competition they endure. Familiarity with the discourse and knowledge of government or corporate managers and scientists will create more inclusiveness. Inclusion will benefit position in social hierarchies and positively affect identity. Exclusion from this will increase alienation and powerlessness, and reduce agency.

Most participants felt excluded from the resource co-management and consultation process. The resulting powerlessness and perceived positional identity become self-serving, as it erodes optimism and perceptions of self-efficacy – two basic tenets of agency (Hitlin and Elder, 2007a). This may help to "…understand something of the collapse and demoralization of some traditional and/or indigenous communities" (*ibid.* pp 49). Hoggett (2001) believes this demoralization in some more traditional communities is a result of internalizing the negativity that results from feeling structurally disempowered. The Métis youth problems highlighted in research indeed point towards a demoralized youth with a reduced sense of self-efficacy. The situation is both an artifact of a lower positional identity and in this case, the disconnection with land-use traditions that influence Métis identity. Youth feel structurally excluded from both their culture and non-Métis society. They feel more like objects than agents. They have not been incorporated into a safety net of cultural continuity through land use tradition nor have most benefited as Métis within the social power structures in which they live. Pursuing Métis tradition and connection to the land may appear to be an outdated and un-empowering endeavor to them.

The concerns about internal division within and between the communities are also clear within the concept of levels of privilege and proximity to the power holders. Many respondents' concerns were over local elites who were viewed as insiders or close to government and corporate powers. Those closer to power find it easier to adopt their ideas, approaches and discourse than those more socially remote (Betts, 1986). These elites who are closer to power holders are better equipped to express their desires and more likely to conform to the hierarchical *status quo.* Hence the concern from respondents who 'just shut up' in community meetings and let local elites mobilize bias and determine local agendas worthy of address.

It is evident that the Métis have a strong desire to resist and reshape structures and hierarchies of power and influence. However, despite an apparent lack of overt constraints that impede resistance (i.e., there appears little direct coercion forced upon them currently, and there is institutional policy mandated to assist them), there appears to be little success at this reshaping of social power structures. Interestingly, there is historic similarity to Antonio Gramsci's 'subaltern' who did not mobilize effectively against cultural oppression, despite an apparent lack of overt coercion to do so (Crehan, 2002). Entrenched, covert power relationships that maintain similar social structures have also been uncovered by Gaventa (1980). Interpretation through an agency-structure and power framework serves to highlight the implicit and inherent reasons behind this. Even if committed as an 'out of awareness act' (Blumer, 2004) or unintended consequence of structure (Betts, 1986), these two authors show that agency can be impeded for some actors by indirect effects that serve to maintain asymmetrical power relations. For example, the use of outside experts to manage resources and dispense resource advice in the communities is resented by some of the respondents. This act serves to reinforce, in the minds of some respondents, that they are viewed by authorities as lacking knowledge, skills and ability. This may work to reinforce animosity (as is evident in the quotes) and replicate a positional identity within the power hierarchy, maintaining the power structures and levels of perceived agency.

The unsuccessful attempts to exert agency, reshape social hierarchies and resituate positional identities may be a result of implicit, tacitly held constraints to action that limit a discursive acknowledgement of these engrained structural constraints in the first place (Betts, 1986). She writes that, "...the most effective forms of ideological control may well involve the very processes that operate to keep the unacknowledged conditions of action unacknowledged, and prevent the relatively powerless from gaining a discursive understanding of their circumstances" (*ibid.* pp 56). These unacknowledged conditions may be the result of the unintended consequences *(ibid.)* of power within structure and agency. The extension of authority and conforming within the co-management and consultation process may not be the overt intent of the authorities in this situation, but an unintended consequence. Betts (*.ibid*) uses the theory of 'Memes'. These are 'cultural genes' – prevalent but tacit units of a particular cultural structure that evolve and endure, like biological genes would do. In other words, "...ideas and practices that are functional to the more powerful are more likely to be objectified and disseminated than ideas and practices that are not" (pg 53). Thus the authority or power holder may not outwardly intend for the natural resource consultation process to conform to their ideals or adopt their preferred structure, but their ideas or practices may be automatically replicated during this process. Memes that are the basis for success and structural process will be selected, objectified and inadvertently produce the unintended consequences; in this case the managerial or scientific epistemology of the authorities. Successful memes in social relationships will be biased towards those already in a favorable position – with a positional identity higher up in the social hierarchy structure. Managers and authorities may admit that they want to acknowledge Métis concern and knowledge but the implicit momentum is already favoring their cultural and epistemic structure, thereby hampering Métis agency and efficacy in this process. This explains how Blumer's (2004) 'structure of process' may effectively hide conditions that replicate the extensions of authority. The momentum of the process reduces the notion of good will and the explicit desire to assist Métis communities into one sided definitions of how the co-operation between parties ought to evolve (Mulsolf, 1992).

The ability to mobilize bias and maintain process favors certain cultural approaches and can maintain societies in a certain ethnic or racial structure (Mulsolf, *.ibid).* By manipulating communication and knowledge hierarchies those in power can shape ideologies of desire. Considering Holland *et al*'s (1998) positional identity and its effect on agency and perception, Mulsolf (*.ibid,* pg 178) states of ethnicity and race, "When mobility is fixed, of course, relatively little opportunity for negotiation exists between the powerful and powerless. The goal of self-determination…structurally relates to group position". This resonates with responses from Métis respondents who feel they have been the ethnic and political underdog within society, as well as with Richardson (2006) and MacNab (2007) who report similar research finds that highlight feelings of ethnic oppression and negative identity amongst Métis.

Traditions, such as those under discussion in this paper play a key role. They form a cultural structure that can serve as an apparatus of resistance and have important instrumentality as a catalyst for agency. Otto and Pedersen (2005) write that the emphasis (even reification) of traditions is very likely during times of rapid social change (e.g. Métis over the last two generations). "Traditions define group identity and evoke a sense of agency" (.*ibid* pg 34). The importance of tradition as the flywheel of cultural continuity (*ibid.*) assumes significance when considering the concern of declining Métis land use traditions between generations. These authors explain, "It is not enough for the new generation simply to grow up in the institutional context created by the parent generation. The latter wants to ensure the continued validity of their social world by means of legitimations that 'explain' and 'justify' the institutional order and therefore help the new generation internalize these patterns" (pg 27). It is thus possible to understand why these traditions become icons of conflict within power relations and why elders and parents see loss of cultural continuity as a genuine threat to Métis agency. The sanctioning or control (even indirectly or unintendedly) of traditional activities of indigenous people by power holders becomes a means to appropriate this activity and control agency (.*ibid*).

Conclusion and Recommendations

"Mead believed that one of the major tasks of social science…was to identify and 'dig out' the character of the more important social acts in operation or formation in the broad expanse of institutional life" (Blumer, 2004, pg98). The aim of this paper has been to dig out the important social acts that affect Métis agency through their use of local natural resources in NW Saskatchewan. Mulsolf (1992) recommends that the challenge for this type of research is to recognize human agency and at the same time incorporate the power of material and ideological structure, as has been addressed herein.

These themes are important in addressing both the physical environmental conditions and highlighting the role of cultural continuity as an attribute of cultural agency. The control, loss or alteration of land use traditions are shown to be key indicators of discontent and channels through which Métis question structures of power and their effect on their agency and efficacy. It is theoretically untenable to ignore social structures and the power relations that influence the agency-structure dialectic. Current Métis relationships with the land receive scant attention in academia and it is important that social research addresses this topic. This paper's contribution has been to make connections between the concerns of Métis land use activity and tradition in NW Saskatchewan, and the diverse sociological theory that attends to social structures and power relations. It is likely to be one of the first to address this.

The theoretical framework uncovers the possibility that current conditions are not necessarily due to purposeful and nefarious use of power or coercion by corporations or governments. The self replicating nature of the power structures has been shown to perpetuate even in the face of expressed good will.

Mulsolf (1992) recommends the development of a discourse or approach that can empower people and help them transform structures and institutions. Considering the findings from this research, perhaps a top-down approach is ineffective in these communities. It may be that those who feel the most disenfranchised or disempowered are the least likely to be heard in the current approach. This is potentially truer given that those closer to the top – closer to the power holders- will be able to voice their concerns more easily, serving to maintain the community divisions and suspicions. These considerations are all the more important as many of the issues within these themes repeat those reported by Beckley and Korber in 1996, implying that the same structural dissatisfaction exists. Métis communities will no doubt continue to exert their agency as self empowerment through TLU and accepting limited degradation from logging. Future research could attend to the nuances between Métis cultural values and the values of the authorities and how these different values sets work to influence land use conflicts in the region.

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Chapter 3: Paper #2

"Mediating Constructivism and Realism in Socio-Cultural Nature Values and Land Use Conflicts – Evidence from Métis Communities NW Saskatchewan"

(Target Journal: Human Ecology Review)

Introduction

The debate between social constructivists and biological realists as to how people define and value 'nature' and environmental resources remains vibrant and ongoing (see Soper, 1995; Proctor, 1998 and Rockmore, 2005). Whether the core of this polarity is labeled as epistemic differences or an inherent disjoint between enquiries engaged with 'social time' or 'natural time' (Newton, 2003), the debate remains an important epistemic nexus for scholars of natural resource and environmental sociology. Importantly, what role can and does this debate play in an applied sense and can examples be situated from current research that focuses on nature-value conflicts?

This paper addresses these conflicts from the standpoint of clashing environmental values and differing knowledge's of nature within a specific cultural context, with evidence from a case study with Métis aboriginal communities in Saskatchewan. The social construction of nature-values and the difference of values and understandings will be addressed through a mediated realism-constructivism approach. Initial treatment will be given to the disciplinary standoff between realist and constructivist epistemologies that is pervasive in the social sciences. A mediation of this binary episteme in the form of an 'artefactual constructivism' or critical realist influenced approach will be used as a model to frame how different knowledges' and values of nature are formed within culture. Evidence from research on the influence of a mediated realist-constructivist epistemology from a cultural standpoint will be examined. A discussion of the role of differing constructions of nature-values and power relationships in regional land use conflicts will then be explored.

Constructivism – Nature as a Purely Social Entity?

"Nature is nothing if it is not social" (Smith, 1990: 30).

The cultural variability introduced into the social conception of nature by constructivist perspectives can be described as a theoretical focus that is concerned with purely socialized ideas. These social ideas are reproduced and legitimated through appeals to nature via uniquely social discourses that see absolute empirical science as problematic because it describes nature through the lens of various scientists, politicians or authors, who claim to have no subjective bias (Stoddart, 2005). In other words, the 'nature' produced by commentators is by nature of its description and articulation, inherently social, according to strong constructivists. Constructivism in defining nature can thus be understood as viewing nature as never unmediated and always valued through social interpretation, regardless of its autonomy (Sutton, 2004). Stedman (2003) relates the notion of sense of place in nature as often thought of only as being a social construction. Space remains 'just a space' until they become 'places' that are imbued with social meaning through lived experiences. Any physical space can embody multiple landscapes or multiple 'places' of social relevance[4]. In a strongly constructed sense of nature, the role of the physical landscape is eschewed; the natural world in its material state is meaningless. Grieder and Garkovich (1994) support this sentiment, writing that, "…landscapes are reflections of cultural identities, which are about us, rather than the natural environment" (pg2), and that landscapes are deeply social environments, with symbolic meanings overlaying the same physical piece of earth.

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[4] This idea from Stedman (2003) that a single physical space can serve as the home of multiple 'places' of social relevance is key in the land use conflict in the case study. This notion is also expanded upon by Macnaghten and Urry (1998).

Other than the ability to elucidate subjective perceptions and values regarding nature, is constructivism of the environment useful, or is it just 'circular cultural relativism' with no real end point or tangible applicability? Curry (2003) feels that constructivism is too often abounds with ambiguity or confusing neologisms that create a confusing array of *–isms* that point to different locations along the constructivism continuum. Stoddart (2005) refers to constructivism as a 'cultural invasion of the social sciences', while Proctor (1998) writes about constructivism's 'relativistic excesses'. Entrikin (1996) warns that "The preoccupation with the social in discussion of place and region threatens to replace a long-disavowed natural reductionism with a social reductionism" (pg 219). Curry (2003) also expresses concern at the irresponsibility of relavitism and pure subjectivity.

To reconcile epistemic extremes, environmental sociology as a sub-discipline fosters the abolishment of the 'baggage of the Durkheim-ian legacy of social facts as separate from the non-human' (Sutton, 2004). The connection of social science with the environment and natural resources highlights the influence that the non-human has on 'social facts'; the nature of social constructions becoming less exclusively social. This nature-human connectivity trend may then negate the validity of pure constructivism in environmental conflict. However, Sutton (*ibid.*) disagrees, proposing that constructivism is valuable by allowing environmental issues to be voiced and can be used to identify and raise questions of a fundamental kind, regardless of the inherent bio-physical reality. After all, environmental-value conflicts are social conflicts. While this is of definite importance, the problem of constructivist epistemology is that it permits non-human nature a real life only under the condition that it is a human mediated existence (Curry, 2003). When this cultural and human program fails, it then leaves nature at the mercy of biological managerialists and is therefore insufficient as a sole paradigm of understanding social nature-values.

(Critical) Realism – the significant role of the bio-physical in social construction of nature.

"…an exclusive emphasis on discourse and signification can very readily appear evasive of ecological realities and irrelevant to the task of addressing them" (Soper, 1995, pg 8).

Realism's premise is that nature is not simply what humans categorize or perceive it to be and that there is a material-ecological substructure inherent to 'nature' as we describe it or underlying environmental conflicts (Sutton, 2004; Stoddart, 2005). All life is set within the physical constraints of nature (Evanoff, 2005).

Environmental problems only become problems once they are socially cognized as such, however it is important to acknowledge that they still existed in physical form before cognition and thus deserve recognition (*ibid.*). As Soper (1995) writes, the 'real thing' has a hole in the ozone layer, irrespective of how it is socially perceived. Sutton (2004) believes that in the face of pressing environmental issues, socially constructed meanings may be frivolous and Martell (1994, in Sutton, *.ibid.* pg 66) adds, "…sociological explanations can sometimes be 'too sociological', if they refuse to accept the intransigent reality of natural forces and powers. Humans are not free to construct nature just as they please". In short, social analysis needs to accommodate natural processes to acknowledge nature's affectivity.

A criticism of a stronger realist perspective is that it often lays the foundation for ecological conflict. Reducing natural processes to measurable units of utility allows for nature to be incorporated within a political economy[5]. A realist epistemology allows for nature to be realized as an economic good and facilitates instrumental rationality that leads to environmental degradation (Williams and Patterson, 1999). Political power in the shape of Foucauldian 'Governmentality'[6] entrenches the dominant ecological epistemology (which may be culturally constructed) through discourse and legitimizes forms of environmental activity and land use that are measured and accepted based on the acknowledgement of the real physical processes (Stoddart, 2005). Curry (2003) also warns of strict realism being a catalyst for resourcism which values nature "…as a mere setting for the human drama…a set of passive resources for the advancement of human interests" (pg338); an element of a strongly empiricist valuation of nature (Proctor, 2003). Soper (1995) reverses this criticism. She writes that it is through realism that political change must be argued and that resistance to dominant ideology can be approached to exercise effects on the environment. Unless we can acknowledge the part of nature that is *not* culturally constructed, we can not challenge the dominant resourcist values of nature and what can be done with it.

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[5] This measurable evaluation becomes an important point of comparison in the case study results.
[6] Used here to refer to neo-Liberal government and modernized bureaucratic control through the production of a certain form of knowledge that regulates individuals and populations from the 'inside' through the reproduction of a certain legitimate knowledge. This knowledge and action serves to reproduce capitalist rule and values. This is also through 'biopower', the control of nature and humans through technology (Hunt and Wickham, 1994; Kerr, 1999).

It is with this notion that 'nature' is largely a construction of culture and that there are simultaneously certain undeniable real characteristics of nature that in turn may influence the aforementioned constructions that we turn to mitigating these two opposed perspectives.

Mediating Socio-Environmental Realities.

"What is beyond our own skin actually exists. But the 'environment' is largely what we make of it, with all the ambiguities inherent in the word *make*" (Simmons, 1993 pg3).

Humans interact with their environments in reciprocal ways. Knowledge, values and ethics develop out of dialectic between humans and a materially distinct world through a series of interactions (Evanoff, 2005). This dialectical perspective implies that humans both constitute and are constituted by the natural and social environments they inhabit; how constructed and material realities interact with each other, that the perceiver and perceived are interdependent (Curry, 2003). The world certainly exists independently of our representations of it, ontologically there is no clash of constructivism and realism; the clash is found in the epistemic representations of each. Stoddart (2005) offers the perspective of a 'stratified ontology' that asserts that there are analytically distinct and autonomous levels of socio-environmental reality and that environmental conflicts are both discursively and materially constituted. Evidence certainly suggests that most environmental problems, when confronted away from abstracted levels, are hybrids that are co-constructed in character (Sutton, 2004). Curry (2003) believes that both realists and constructivists are similarly irresponsible by being too anthropocentric. Both approaches strip nature of intrinsic value and agency and encourage a separation between human and nature. Further support to the value of the realism/constructivism union can be articulated through environmental concerns (Proctor, 1998). Truth claims may not be sufficient condition to justify environmental concern - social perception is necessary to accomplish this (Sutton 2004). However, Proctor (*ibid.*) points out that these 'realist' truth claims are necessary to create the social concern; the interdependence once again evident.

To understand constructed environmental claims, Carolan (2006) and Macnaghten and Urry (1998) believe that constructions of nature can be best understood contextually, through tactile spaces. When the tactile, material characteristics of the environment in context meet with the constructed perceptions of the 'nature' of that space, a more comprehensive picture of the relationship between the socially constructed nature and the real material nature can be built. Using the benefit of real, tactile spaces, a constructed version of the *in situ* nature can be articulated, combining the real natural space and physical attributes with cultural concepts borne out of interactions with nature – a phenomenological understanding of the bio-physical and cultural. Stedman (2003) expands the notion of phenomenology through sense of place experiences that are influenced by physical attributes of nature. He believes sense of place, typically viewed as a social construction only, grows out of a strong influence by physical attributes and importantly, experiential activity; he writes, "Although social constructions are important, they hardly arise out of thin air: the local environment sets bounds and gives form to constructions" (pg 671). The influence of lived experience on the construction and valuation of nature is also supported by Macnaghten and Urry (1998) and Curry (2003), who adds that variables that may influence conceptualization of the world include the character of the biophysical, geography and locality.

This hybridity and mutual influence between the real material world and socially constructed nature supports Sutton's (2004) 'artefactual constructivism'; moving beyond the binary and polarized constructivist vs. realist perceptions of nature. This conjoined character of constructivism being articulated with tactile spaces, enables a more holistic understanding of how people may value and perceive their environment and avoids one-sided valuations and descriptions of this complex node of objective and subjective realities. Sutton (*ibid.*) suggests that the constructivist/realist standoff can be avoided, and that 'artefactual' constructivism (or forms of constructivist influenced critical realism or pragmatism (see Proctor, 2003)) can be engaged through analysis of different 'embedded social practices'. Two of these embedded practices include *discourse* – how people may speak of and write about their constructs of nature; and *embodiment* – the way people may sense or experience nature or their environments (this is relevant given the above notions of physical experience in constructing nature and tactile spaces)[7]. This supports how physical landscape attributes can be transformed in social symbols and how these symbols define what it means to be human within a certain culture (Grieder and Garkovich 1994). This motivation is important in the case study analysis because the social conflict over the same physical resources arises out of the different social values that these material resources embody. It is therefore the understanding of this multiple constructivism and monistic realism junction that aides in understanding how the various social constructions can lead to resource conflict and how this research approach contributes to natural resource sociology.

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[7] This too become relevant when discussing the role of experiential influence within the biophysical and the social 'taskspace' and muscular memory that overlays a particular landscape once people have interacted with it.

Métis Land Use and Historical Culture-Nature Relationship: Contextualizing the Case Study

Traditional land use (TLU) and harvest of wild-products by historic Métis communities in Canada is well documented and considered culturally characteristic of the Métis (Pelletier, 1974; Sprenger, 1978 and Pannekoek, 1998). This relationship with the environment was no different in Hivernant Métis who migrated to Northwest Saskatchewan in the19th century and continued to rely on forest resources for their livelihoods (Burley *et al*, 1992 and MacDougal, 2006). The importance of these land uses remains entrenched in contemporary Métis communities in the northwest of the province (Tobias *et al*, 1994 and Adamowicz *et al*, 2004). These traditional land uses are touted as key social and cultural activities and as pivotal in community and cultural health (mental and dietary) and environmental stewardship (Shore and Barkwell, 1997). Modern decline in access to these traditional land uses and their products is lamented by Métis in North West Saskatchewan (Poelzer and Poelzer, 1986).

Economic and material substitution of these activities and products, and importantly the local values that they represent, is cautioned against by Dosman *et al* (2001) and Adamowicz *et al* (1998) who write, "…valuation is endogenous to specific social environments, aggregations of indigenous and non-indigenous measures of social welfare may be inappropriate" (pg51). Changes to Métis land use activities and wild-harvests have been due in large part to industrial logging operations in the region and the growing forestry initiative as a land management priority (Dosman *et al,* 2001; Haener *et al,* 2001 and Adamowicz *et al,* 2004). These logging operations have resulted in environmental and landscape change and affected wildlife harvests in the region (Dosman *et al*, 2001 and Morton *et al*, 1994). This poses an important question relevant to Métis community land use and wild-harvests – just how do the different and sometimes seemingly incompatible land use systems co-exist and what is the relationship between different land use paradigms from a Métis perspective? How do Métis values and the values of industrial resource extraction co-exist, considering that different social values and beliefs attached to nature work to shape the 'nature' of shared landscapes for people (Grieder and Garkovich, 1994)? Overt acrimony by Métis residents in the region indicates that their values and field of knowledge may not be wholly compatible with current forest management approaches and that substitution of traditional land uses and products with replacements may in fact be fallible.

Saskatchewan Environment and Resource Management (SERM) and the local forest management corporation do employ a co-management approach and consult with local communities. In addition, both management parties have mandated that non-timber uses of the forest (traditional land uses and recreation) be included within an integrated land use plan that aims to accommodate different social desires and perceptions of the regional boreal forests (SERM website and Adamowicz *et al*, 2004). This is in accordance with the 1995 Saskatchewan Long-Term Integrated Forest Resource Management Plan which acknowledges the non-timber values of the Boreal forest such as aesthetic, subsistence and cultural values and states that, "Aboriginal issues such as the impact of timber industry development, the degradation of the environment and the loss of cultural identity are key in managing the forest resource" (Saskatchewan Govt. 1995 pg 6-17). In addition it makes reference to the value of community involvement and local knowledge as important aspects of sustainable forest management. The report identifies the need to avoid and mitigate any land user conflicts and it alludes to the fact that these conflicts are often based on users' *values* of the forest landscape, "Often each user feels that his particular resource is the most valuable and has not given consideration to any others" (*ibid.* pg 6-14). However, the current research evidences an ongoing and current land use conflict. Métis residents express concern over logging techniques and volumes and disappointment in the impact their values have on the forest management process.

Case Study and Data Collection

Data used for this research were taken from semi-structured interviews. A total of 66 interviews (68 participants, 728 transcribed pages) were conducted by university researchers in Northwest Saskatchewan in the summers of 2005 and 2006 in eight predominantly Métis communities all located between Beauval in the south, La Loche in the north and as far east as Pinehouse. The relevance of these communities is that they are all within or adjacent to the 3.3 million hectare Forest Management Agreement area of an industrial forestry company, Mistik Management, so all are effected by forest management policy and corporate/government decisions regarding the regional forest. Initial interview respondents were purposively chosen by community liaisons and from there, a snowball technique was used whereby participants would assist in identifying further interview candidates. Participants who had natural resource use experience, like trappers, hunters, commercial fisherman, guides, loggers or people who harvest medicinal or food plants regularly were sought out. This *in situ* method proved invaluable and was also used successfully by Poelzer and Poelzer (1986) in the region. Initial purposive sampling aids in identifying a broad spectrum of respondents, ensuring breadth in age, gender and experience relevant to the research topic (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). It is important to note that the responses of some participants may be limited as to what they are willing to divulge or may be selective in terms of answers, co-operation or reflection of their true intentions. Cross referencing and triangulating with other interview results and subsequent member-checks were used to validate the findings.

The transcribed interview data were coded with NVIVO software, adopting what Miles and Huberman (1994) term a 'start codes' approach. Certain themes were chosen that were relevant to this research and the responses under each theme code were highlighted and cross-referenced to elaborate any evidence of socially unique responses to the environmental conflict and perceptions of nature as different to those used by the dominant regional institutions.

Findings, Discussion and Theoretical Comparison

"I feel quite strongly that there are better ways of utilizing our forests, you know." (Interview Respondent, 2006).

The clash of values between local Métis residents and the forest management authorities is overt. Concern and unhappiness with forestry operations saturates the data. Statements such the following were common throughout:

> …so every tree they cut down they make a pile of money, but in turn we're gettin' hurt and they're laughing…
>
> Q: So what's the biggest threat to livelihood up here then?
>
> A: Well, I guess, you know, forestry to us, you know, like, by the time they finish cutting everything.
>
> There's a lot of community members that rely on our traditional foods, so in that sense, I'm kind of worried when big companies come in and clear cut our forest.

Evidence from field data begins to support many aspects that literature highlights as being commonplace in the social construction of nature-values; social constructions that are hinged upon local bio-physical attributes. Further analysis revealed statements that provide support for the theoretical motivation for an 'artefactual constructivism'. These can be found in four broad categories. The categories are evident in the literature addressing the creation of environmental values (see Macnaghten and Urry, 1998 and Williams and Patterson, 1999).

1) Nature Values Built around Cultural and Traditional Influence

To compliment the thesis of nature-values and their construction through localized influence it is important to address the historic and cultural importance of the environment to Métis communities described above, a socio environmental relationship that has been described as 'organic and open' (Burely *et al*, 1992). The influence of this cultural characteristic plays an important role in local nature values, with 50/66 interviews making reference to Métis cultural relationships with the land. The following responses are representative (the first respondents involved in logging operations):

> I had my own logging outfit, and I liked it at first a lot but then something drove me back to my background, I wasn't really into the logging part of it. I felt kind of bad because of my traditional way of life, my culture, that I was harming the forest, cutting down forest.

> Well, the tree cutting part, yeah, I didn't like it at all. Being a trapper first of all, a traditional land user, and then going to the logging aspect of it, it didn't seem right at all, my spiritual being and everything. Yeah, and it kind of touched everything.

Furthermore, some respondents felt very strongly about the values imbued upon them from cultural heritage. One respondent, when asked about outfitting and guiding hunting services answered:

> …in our heritage, I don't think you're supposed to make a dime off of animals or off of the land...the creator gave it to us for a certain reason and that's to live off of it, not to sell, you're not supposed to sell, to go and play with the land, eh?

> But, you know, we still use the land. The land is important to us because it's important to our ancestors and my grandfather, my dad…it's important to them so it's equally important to us.

The means of physically accessing the landscape also influences environmental values. The evolution in means of forest access represented a historic reflection and a yardstick for changing cultural traditions amongst some participants. Macnaghten and Urry (1998) address the use of easily accessible and rapid motorized movement within a landscape. This may be a point of value conflict as people who engaged with the landscape more intimately prior to the availability of new technology feel that this is a more 'promiscuous' means of accessing the land and feel that it contradicts their nature values and traditions. More strenuous physical access developed a 'muscular consciousness' with the landscape by those who accessed it with greater effort and intimacy. They feel that this ease of access results in a loss of knowledge about, or feeling for the land. This feeling was common amongst some older research respondents. Some felt it was more traditional or culturally appropriate to access the land in ways that were more common in the past. Statements such as these highlight the shift in relationship with nature (the first response making reference to logging operations and their means of accessing land):

> Exactly, for the clear cutting they use four wheelers and skidoos now too instead of walking for, you know a couple hours a day, they don't do that, they just use skidoos instead of walking. It's the easy way to do things now.

> You don't grab a paddle and start paddling around the bend and go make little a camp fire somewhere, you jump into your nice fancy boat and start the motor and you go, you know? That's what hurts your way of life.

The disdain over accessing the land with technology is predominantly due to means that most view as disrespectful and abusive use of this technology. Most respondents indeed use 'modern technology' to access the land, but in a respectful way. This respectful use does not reduce the environmental relationship values that are deep rooted and tenacious, indicating the significance of these value-relationships with specific landscapes (Grieder and Garkovich, 1994).

2) How lived experience shapes the construction of nature values

In his mediation of the realist and constructivist perspectives of the environment, Stedman (2003) writes that experiences within the biophysical are crucial in determining how attachment and sense of place are socially constructed through activities (e.g. hunting) that are enabled by that landscape's physical attributes. Valuation of the environment is created that is consistent with what one does in the physical landscape, a social construction with definite physical influence. Macnaghten and Urry (1998) use the term 'taskspace' to capture the physical landscape through its social character and range of local activities. This, in effect, is a mediation of realism and constructivism through a 'dwelling perspective' that recognizes social time, history and experiential activity on the landscape as important elements of socio-environmental values. Socio-environmental values and relationships are constructed when people move through and physically interact with their local environment. Research showed that regional food harvest, recreation and cultural/spiritual activities were overwhelmingly common amongst the local Métis participants. Statements referring to how their activities on the land (referenced in 37/66 interviews) have helped them to realize the value of the local environment and has given them a context to ground their nature-values were overt, with statements such as these:

> From beginning of my time I grew up in the old traditional way of living in our society which is subsistence hunting and living off the land. Utilize the forest every imaginable way. I used to go out on a trap-line with my grandfather, he'd take me to the cabin and he'd show me his way. He was a medicine man so he even utilized the forest more than what he showed me. You go out into the forests, he can teach you all these things in the traditional way…but it's more a spiritual aspect of things, how you ground yourself once again from living this life over here, trying to bring you back to where you actually come from, you're part of Mother Earth, you're part of the big picture and if you destroy something within that big picture you're going to be in debt at the end of the day…they took you into the forest and without you knowing it they were passing down the knowledge.

When lamenting the loss of trap-lines in the cut-block areas another respondent made this comment about the experiential value of traditional land-based activities:

> This is how I raise my children and grandchildren, you know. This is my schooling where I teach my children and my grandchildren about forestry[8] and everything else that comes with it. And now it's gone.

Relevant to this is the influence of tactile spaces highlighted by Sutton (2004). The tactility of the local environment combined with the lived experience and 'muscular memory' of social movement on a particular landscape lends itself to influencing perceptions and meanings of nature. One respondent quote captures that ethic when she said that she believed that people who lived off the land were the best stewards and believed that

> You'd have to live in the bush to experience what it's got out there.

3) The influence of (changing) local geography on social perceptions of the environment

"Thus, when events or technological innovations challenge the meanings of these landscapes, it is our conceptions of ourselves that change through a process of negotiating new symbols and meanings" (Grieder and Garkovich, 1994, pg2).

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[8] In the local context the word 'forestry' often refers not necessarily to commercial industrial logging and silviculture but is often used to refer to forest-based activities and knowledge of the forest-nature.

Considering that many Métis respondents referred to how the large cut blocks and forest access roads had damaged or negated their trails, trap lines, cabins and hunting and harvest areas (changing geography referenced in 39/66 interviews), it is poignant that Macnaghten and Urry (1998) address how landscape change affects rural perception of local environments, "Suddenly paths…are overwhelmed by instantaneous routes which literally seems to carve through the landscape, killing trees, paths, dwellings and existing taskscape" (pg168). Change to the landscape may dramatically alter the basis of attachment to the environment and determine how it is valued, as the relevant activities become lost or impossible. For example:

> If we didn't have forests where we live, I think our people would die. We've had many people that have moved out of our community, because they couldn't see the trees or any moose, there's fewer moose back, you know. They just didn't feel that comfort.

New roads or urbanization, for example, provoke intense opposition because they rapidly destroy parts of the environment that are not just biological, but also social landscapes that house meaning and social reference points (Macnaghten and Urry,1998). The concern expressed in research interviews regarding cut blocks certainly mirrors other agents of landscape change used in literature. This participant relayed comments about landscape change made by a trapper in her family:

> A: He comes home sometimes and he will tell us these stories of how…what would be the word? Just, he comes home really sad, and full of sorrow

> because the land has been ripped apart .You know with the logging, the trees being cut down…you should see that there's great big bald spots all over the place.
>
> Q: The, the clear cuts?
>
> A: The clear cuts.

Another participant mentioned that the changes in the local forests diminish land use activities and stated:

> It's not even nice to go to my camp anymore. There's no trees left. There's no - all you hear is equipment all day and all night, you know.

The influence of local geography on social well being can further be elucidated from this quote:

> I lived in the city of Edmonton for a few years and I just couldn't survive without the water. You know, I would go down to the river edge just to see the water.

4) Historical Recall

"…human relationships with the environment are really cultural expressions used to define who we were, who we are, and who we hope to be at this place and in this space" (Grieder and Garkovich, 1994, pg2).

Stedman (2003) writes that it becomes more difficult to hold onto place meanings when the physical environment changes and as the gap between the constructed meanings and the real characteristics of the physical environment widens (as evidenced above). To maintain these meanings and constructions of the environment, the role of memory is often used. Recalled experiential phenomena continue to shape the current meaning and construction of the environment. This historic recall was common amongst research participants (48/66 interviews). They would often recall how land-use used to be 'better', 'easier' or that the environment used to be healthier, more productive or less degraded, making wild-harvest easier or of higher quality. Statements such as these were common and would often included phrases like:

> Well, for me, initially everything was good.
>
> We lived quite freely in the north prior to any government policies coming into the north.
>
> …it's a different world for us now.

In support of historic recall, Macnaghten and Urry (1998) write, "People imagine themselves treading the same paths as countless earlier generations. Simply redirecting a path, let alone eliminating it, will often be viewed as an 'act of vandalism' against that sedimented taskscape, that community and their memories", (pg168). The following quote connects their statement with a quote from research findings:

> …we grew up in areas that have never been logged…well they used to log it, for years they used to log, but they would be selective logging, you know they took a

> few trees out of the bush and you'd never even notice, but now it's all clear cutting and that's what really hurts I think.

Similarly, historical recall is social tool that uses the past to redefine the present and project the future. Landscapes are also under renegotiation and re-evaluation based on past values, symbols and experiences *(ibid).* The strength of historical recall to project a past deemed as culturally or environmentally better was commonplace in the research, as exemplified in this quote:

> Q: So how come the youth are interested in getting back to the land?
>
> A: Maybe it's just a memory, the good memory that people always have with them...that still carry on and they want to live that good memory.

In addition to the four criteria highlighted in literature, there is strong evidence of localized and socialized valuations of nature that differ from the rationalized measuring of nature from a techno-realist stance. When valuing the local environment and describing it in its entirety, respondents would often point out that their notions of their surrounds did in fact differ from those in government or land management authorities. The following is an example of the response an interviewee gave to a government representative when discussing the population of Northwestern Saskatchewan:

> I said, "Northern Saskatchewan is heavily populated because you can't only look at people. You've got to look at the environment, you've got to look at the forestry, you've got to look at the animals, you've got to look at all these things, the fish, everything else." So it's heavily populated.

This response provides a similar social perception of the relationship between the local communities and their surroundings:

> The animals are part of our, a part of us, like we're in a circle, like we're all communities I guess, and we all have to live amongst each other.

In addition to the evidence above and the occurrence of statements by respondents that allude to their nature-values hinged upon culture, geography and bio-physically influenced constructions, some made overt reference to the existence of unique local nature-values. Some of these statements were directed towards the difference between their nature-values and those of government or industry management for example:

> Look at the trappers you know, sometimes the areas that are burning the government sees them as diseased areas or areas that are nonproductive in terms of timber, in terms of things they see as value-added. But in terms of the aboriginal people, in terms of the Métis people those areas are rich as any gold mine or uranium mine because of the abundance of animals, the plants and herbs and stuff that they can gather from there.

> And we actually have had people, you know, come very close to the community as far as the forest industry goes, and leave a mess behind. You know, because there's not that fundamental value there to them, or a traditional value to them. They're a large company; the people who are delegating or giving direction have probably never been here. Nor do they see what's left behind when the company leaves.

The above statements not only highlight a clash of values and differing nature-value sets but again incorporate elements of existence, presence and experience with the local bio-physical as being important in creating a different set of appreciation and field of values for the local environment. Further analysis evidences power relationships that are being exercised over which set of values dominate the local land uses. Many respondents feel that their environmental values incorporated as traditional knowledge are overlooked and considered as less legitimate in comparison to the measurable and manageable units employed by authorities. Macnaghten and Urry (1998) consider this competition of values to be an important strategy in political-ecological structure and write, "Moreover, by defining limits in terms of physical quantities, the political focus lies in achieving commitments to limit economic behaviors as opposed to the more fundamental questions concerning the very relationship between the natural and the social upon which current economic behavior resides" (pg 16/17). Some respondents believed that authorities plan to curb traditional land use and access to resources as a means to hold sway over local Métis lifestyle and activity. The validity of this claim can certainly not be ascertained from this research, but what is important is the strength of this belief amongst certain residents. Some stated that the government's nature-values, reflected in their management policy, were responsible for a decline in traditional land use and increase in social problems, as mentioned by this respondent:

> And they [Métis] were active people but now that activeness is gone and they sit like a mould buildup and they get sick and diseased, and the system takes care of them in every way but it's only for a reason, and the reason is now the government

> can extract anything they want, you know they hold us tied down, they sew our mouths together you know and then our people are getting caught in a fight now, all of a sudden there's maybe 60% of them that back government because government gives to them to survive and they're still 40% over here that speak against government policy, against all the things that are going on in the communities saying, you know "is that what we want? Is that the kind of life we choose for future generations" you know, for myself I say no. That's why, you know, every chance I'll get, I speak out because I believe if I don't speak out then that 60% increases to maybe 70% you know.

Considering the evidence of a nature-value clash in the region and the belief of some that they are the victims of power relations that are often played out as socio-environmental issues, it is important to give treatment to the nature of these power relations and the role that differing nature values play in this relationship.

Differences in values and the exercise of power

"In the context of landscapes, power is the capacity to impose a specific definition of the physical environment, one that reflects the symbols and meanings of a particular group of people" (Grieder and Garkovich, 1994, pg17).

There is strong evidence in the case study that the land use conflict between the Métis and the forestry operators and government is in large part due to different socially constructed values and socio-cultural interpretation. Proctor (1998) proposes that, "…the epistemological question, 'which truth-claim is more adequate?', is joined by the ontological question: 'what kinds of historical/geographical structural relations and contingent conditions have combined to result in this diverse set of truth claims?" (pg361). Power relationships and the contingent construction of nature values by the actors in these relationships is a fundamental issue worth investigating in the social relations over contested spaces and what particular values take precedence in these socially layered spaces. Examples of similar nature-valuation conflicts exist in literature, such as the clash of cultural and scientific values between Aborigines and park rangers over Australian fire management (Grieder and Garkovich, 1994). They state that, "What scientists or developers define as a simple modification of the natural environment…may be defined as a threat to the fundamental meaning of a groups lifeworld…" (pg14). Even if unintended, this creation of value based conflict is the consequence of legitimizing one set of values over another.

Examples of the dissonance in values and the worth of nature between local community members and the dominant corporate and government powers in the region are evident in data and noted by Beckley and Korber (1996). In the interviews there exists an awareness of a land-value power hierarchy, evident in statements such as this:

> A lot of times there's areas within our fur block here that we've campaigned to the government, to the lumber industries, saying "you know maybe you shouldn't go there and cut those big timber that are in there, because it's a calving area, it's a breeding area for animals such as caribou and moose and if you destroy those you're destroy the populations". You know but industry oversteps the small man

> all the time… the government has one edge on us that keeps people away from getting up and being vigilant in terms of what they see as theirs; what they believe.

The power held by different social actors can influence whose environmental valuations come to the fore in space-place conflicts (Evanoff, 2005). This perspective on power relations influences the way in which nature and the environment are constructed and allows constructed meanings of nature to frame social conflict. Different types of land uses are organized in a hierarchical fashion and certain activities are legitimized through this hierarchy. Given the 'social nature' of these shared landscapes, Soper (1995) adds that the prevailing land use and management regime will be reduced to the dominating value-constructions and ideologies.

Baldwin (2003) and Curry (2003) believe that those who live around the contested landscape are forced to reinvent their values *vis-à-vis* this dominant view. Examples of this conflicting conformation to a different value set are evident in this research. The dominant valuation re-constructs the view of nature of those adjacent to the resource through epistemic superiority:

> When logging first came in and people were totally opposed to it because it was closely tied in with our surroundings… and they said, "Well, forestry here, once again, government's going to push it and if we don't grab on to it we're going to lose it. So we are going into forestry." People said, "Okay." First thing that came to their mind was the least impact. Let's not destroy everything just to get a dollar

> out of the bush. So the older generation recommended selective cutting. Big industry, as usual, opposes.

The need to accept and be involved with activities that contradict values is also further evidence of the switch to accepting different value sets out of necessity. This is apparent where respondents are torn between wage employment in industry (that affects their traditional land use and creates land use concerns), while also wanting to live in a healthy environment:

> So they've [Métis] been kinda torn between do we do this to make a living, or do we do this, or not do this to ...to sustain the traditional use.

Community members expressed a desire to value the local forests as more than a source of timber or units of production. The following statement highlights the desire to manage the forest as a resource that has diverse values:

> On one hand we're saying here, "Do we have enough wood?" And the question we're saying is, "Yes, we have enough wood to harvest 260,000 cubic meters on an annual basis." And then, you know, the forest will sustain itself but we have to make sure that reforestation happens and buffer zones are set up by lakes, rivers whatever… and there's access for game, the fur-bearing animals and the water doesn't get too hot for the fish and then they'll start dying. And we'd also like to see some areas preserved…sites and burial grounds and traditional lands where people harvest their medicines and berry picking or whatever, you know, and we're trying to identify as much natural land as possible.

However, the dominant management policy appears to conflate the values of ecological integrity, local ecological knowledge and local perceptions of nature as synonymous with economic loss and financial inefficiency. This creates a situation where one social valuation and construction of nature that is dominant (i.e. instrumentalism) is legitimized as the correct choice and policy. For example:

> Initially what we wanted to do was to leave the forest as it is. That's why the group of communities got together and then told the developer that we felt we were ready to develop. And governments sort of pushing us and saying, "Well, they got a timber supply license and if we don't use that, then we're going to have to allocate it to somebody else." That kind of policies are hindering us from holding on to that land and really evaluating our land mass and say, "This is the best way to develop it," and some communities say, "Well, we'd like to have a sawmill operation in Pinehouse or Beauval or Ile la Crosse," and the government is saying, "Well, I don't think those are viable. Maybe the one mill in Beauval would be better." So the government's sort of dictating a little bit to us, and sort of saying, "Either you use it or lose it." And we'd like to use it differently and allocate the wood differently but they sort of keep pushing us.

These dominant environmental value sets ascribe different importance to land use activities and legitimizes some activities while eschewing the importance of others that hold relevance for locals (Baldwin, 2003). Examples include:

> There's trap lines that are being, you know, destroyed. The excuse that they use, "Well, you know, trapping is a thing of the past. It's more or less a hobby nowadays." No, it isn't a hobby!

> Mystic approached me. One of their guys approached me and showed me a map. "Is this where you trap?" they told me. I told him exactly where I trapped. And,

> "Okay, we're going to take a little plot here, another little plot here, and another little plot here." "Sure, no problem with me. You guys go that way, that route, if you take that route; it's no problem with me. As long as you keep my trail open, I told him." I go there a week later, there's one spruce tree standing up. It's clear cut. So far. It's clear cut, my trap line. I just about cried.

These examples above also echo the use of power by disregarding the values of the 'powerless'. Manipulating the land base that supports the less powerful is a commonly exercised form of power Gaventa (1980). Some respondents notice that certain types of nature-knowledge are omitted from the policy agenda, or given only superficial acknowledgement, working to mobilize only one view of nature, constructed from one epistemic standpoint, for example:

> ...the stuff that they do today isn't... they don't rely on the traditional knowledge of our people. It doesn't mean anything. They'll respect it in a meeting, you know. They'll be smoking a pipe with you or sharing a gift or sharing bannock or whatever it is. They'll respect it. But once you're out of there, it's just like the line's drawn again, a battlefield all over again.

> I have a lot of good ideas about what should be done here and there, a lot of good ideas about the resources and that...we're not listened to, you know. That's why it's bad, yeah.

Similarly, this omission may serve to reinforce a weakened identity or weaken knowledge. In this case the omission of the traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) of the elders may serve to reinforce the belief that their knowledge and values are insufficient or inapplicable and that the manner in which the biophysical has influenced their construction of what nature is, is invalid. This negative reinforcement is highlighted by Gaventa (1980) where people would see themselves as not having enough knowledge to compete with the power holders or influence decisions:

> The respect that our elders are getting right now, basically, is Mystic Management will set up a meeting in Meadow Lake to have a forum for elders. They'll give them each a couple of hundred dollars. They'll transport them down there to feed them. But it doesn't go anywhere from there. So they get used. They get used and then or people here get frustrated at the elders. They say, "Well, you guys don't know anything. You guys are outdated".

However the faith in local values and knowledge appears to remain strong. Some respondents believe that industry could do well to pay more attention to their local knowledge and values. It remains an important tool for them in the land-use conflicts, as highlighted by this respondent:

> …so you know I think there's still that traditional knowledge that we have that can give us the upper hand that industry's not looking at.

The evidence of this stream of dissent highlights a concern that warrants attention by policy makers who endeavor to be sensitive to local values and incorporate local stakeholders. Through these power relations and value hierarchies the undercurrent of different value systems for the forest-nature, borne out of culture and a different epistemic value paradigm for the resources, is identifiable. This valuation articulates to the attributes of experience, history and changing geography and the way that these influence how nature is measured and reduced to various parts.

Conclusion

"It cannot be determined in advance exactly how different cultures will work out their own guiding visions for the future. These depend upon the interaction between two variables: the *objective possibilities provided by environments* and the *subjective aspirations of the people inhabiting those environments*" (Evanoff, 2005, pg 69, *emphasis added*).

The thesis of this paper was to lay out, as concisely as possible given the complexity of the issues, the application of a mediated approach to the constructivism/realism debate. The adoption of a critical realism, pragmatism or perhaps more accurately 'artefactual constructivism' approach allows for this binary theoretical standoff to be mediated without many of the shortcomings inherent is each approach. It permeates the anthropocentrism inherent to both realism and constructivism and provides agency for the bio-physical without being overly eco-deterministic (Curry, 2003); relying on both social facts (culture) and nature. Evidence of unique Métis values within the region was provided that fit with the 'artefactual constructivism' foundation provided in literature – using both social and bio-physical criteria. The case study used is highly applicable because of the unique Métis culture and their long history of traditional land use and relationship with natural resources. The manifestation of different nature-values plays out in many ways as land use conflicts between of traditional land use values and industrial forestry.

In managing landscapes that are the scene of social conflicts, it may be important to bear in the mind that landscapes are real places that *imply* contextualized meanings, not only generalizable values and processes. Ecosystem and natural resource management needs to address social constructions in addition to the scientific theories and operational conceptions of managing them. Context and locality influenced social constructivism around physical ecosystems becomes invaluable in decision making (Williams and Patterson, 1999 and Sutton, 2004). Management policy typically adopts a utilitarian construction of nature and emphasizes economic relations over political and social relations (Williams and Patterson, 1999). Incorporating 'other' constructions of the contested space could avoid the conflicts illuminated above and aide in making sense of what Proctor (1998, pg 363) describes as, "…the personal ironies and messy contingencies that play such a major role in conflicts over nature".

Divisive conflicts pit a monistic realist perspective and resulting construction of the environment by power holders with the social-constructions of other less powerful groups, resulting in complex land management issues. It is perhaps co-management relationships (Beckley and Korber, 1996 and Nadasdy, 2007) that may be able to balance differing environmental constructions as conjoined realities. The need in this conflict is to balance values of utilitarian and technical valuations of the environment, with those of a more symbolic and pluralist utility and the constructions of nature that are borne out of that different, but not necessarily opposed epistemology. In so doing, overlapping values constructed in the same real space can be mediated to be mutually influential and applicable in real socio-environmental resource conflicts.

Accounting for the paucity of this research approach in this geographical and cultural context in the literature reviewed, future research will play an important role and introduce valuable insight. Future research may serve to, "…identify 'inventoriable' environmental properties that characterize important aspects of human-environment relationships" (Williams and Patterson, 1999, pg 149). In so doing various local environmental features, spaces and activities can be recorded as local physical attributes but can also be imbued with qualitative meaning by concerned parties and stakeholders. A resulting inventory of local spaces or features can hold important constructed values and be used in policy and decision making in the regions forests. Increasing the scope of participant values, and the importance of those values, will significantly benefit co-management relationships and reduce conflict between communities, government and forestry concern.

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Chapter 4: Conclusion

The work presented in thesis has explored the Métis perceptions and effects of competing land uses, land use policy and Métis involvement in the planning and management of Boreal forests in Northwest Saskatchewan. The objectives herein were to 1) identify key concerns of Métis participants in northwest communities regarding industrial land use, in particular forestry; 2) examine the role of culture and tradition in determining why and how these concerns and responses are highlighted by participants; and 3) to examine the complex social and environmental forces that underpin these concerns and conflicts that overlap shared spaces.

The methods used were effective in uncovering detailed, current information from residents in the region that may not have been possible with remote surveying. The rich nature of the information collected helped reveal not only the prevailing perceptions about regional land use and forestry but also its effect on Métis traditions, cultural continuity, social structures, environmental governance and perceptions of corporate and government land-use policy. Exposure of these findings can help bureaucrats and managers to modify and evolve policy that addresses Métis interests in land use planning and they can gain a richer understanding of why Métis may not support their policies or why they may feel antagonistic to these policies due to historic and current precedents. These findings, while inherent to many local Métis narratives, can also be used as a mirror by Métis and their communities to address some of the structural constraints and social challenges that they face as a result of a changing landscape and its effect on their lives. Information herein will hopefully contribute to providing incentive for a review of policy process and community interaction. As a case study applied to the preceding theoretical frameworks in the two papers, it is hoped that this can be used as empirical application of theory within the disciplines of rural sociology and Aboriginal studies. It is valuable to add that through member-checks (27-28 March 2008) the information presented in this thesis was ascertained to correct, true and was well accepted as an accurate portrayal by those to whom this information was presented.

Summary of Findings

This study has shown the complexity inherent to land-use conflicts and the various social and institutional structures that support these land uses. The Métis participants in this study had very strong opinions about their regional forests and the different and overlapping land uses that were competing for spaces within them. These forests represented a source of profitable fiber and timber, food, recreation, aesthetic quality and historic connections to culture for most of Métis participants interviewed. Changes to these forests, and importantly changes that Métis feel are brought about without benefit to them, create and reflect a series of concerns about the environment, tradition, culture and their position in society.

The prevalence of concern over forest cut blocks was an overarching theme but one that served to represent a host of other issues that the Métis feel strongly about regarding their role in forest management. It is important to bear in mind that research showed that the majority of Métis (30 out of 35 randomly selected interviews = 85%) did not express outright opposition to forestry and 26 out of those 35 were in favor of working in the forestry industry (= 74%). The concern expressed throughout the study was that Métis felt that they had no involvement in forestry policy, that the current scale of the cut blocks was unacceptable and that they were seeing little benefit from what they felt was excessive environmental degradation. Métis are mostly accepting of industry and of bearing some costs but want more inclusiveness in the benefits, planning and reduction of the costs.

The concern over the forestry damage was thus both literal and a surrogate issue for larger social dynamics that they felt thwarted their concern over the environment and their affectivity to change this. Most felt that the formal channels through which to express this concern, such as co-management and consultation processes, were done as a matter of policy-course and that outcomes in favor of government and industry were predetermined, despite their contestation. Research highlighted a discursive awareness of the difference in approach and knowledge used between Métis and forest managers. Feelings of being ill-equipped to compete with forest management and a lack of local formal education in this field left many feeling like their knowledge was treated as token input. A history of Métis dispossession and oppression by government and corporations only serves to intensify the current disappointment in these structures. This lead to participants often stating that the only way out was ‘to be militant’, to ‘set up road blocks’ or that ‘being in prison’ could not be worse than how they are currently sidelined as a culture.

The notion of resistance and challenge to legislation is more than lip-service and has been acted out by Métis both regionally and nationally in a number of legal challenges by the Métis. In 1989 Métis protestors erected road blocks north of Meadow Lake, SK to protest peat development and again 1992 to protest benefit equity, compensation and environmental degradation from the forestry industry (Beckley and Korber, 1996). This 1992 blockade lasted 18 months, attracted national and international attention and included the charging and arrest of 30 protestors from the group who called themselves Protectors of Mother Earth (*ibid.*). A major Métis contestation to legal policy and act of resistance was the landmark Powley Case in 1992. It involved two Métis hunters who illegally killed a Moose (*Alces alces)* in Ontario. Their motivation was one of traditionally harvesting winter meat and their legal rationale was one of cultural right as Aboriginal people. The hunters were charged and prosecuted. However, the case was won by the Métis defendants in Provincial courts and again in the Supreme Court of Canada in 2003, under the guise that they were so entitled under s.35 of the Constitution Act of 1982 – defining Métis as one of Canada’s Aboriginal peoples which upheld the Métis right to hunt for food (Sawchuk 2001). This case was a watershed decision for Métis rights in Canada. More recently the Janvier Case has furthered the cause of Métis resistance (Métis National Council, 2008).

This case too involves a Métis trapper from La Loche, SK who knowingly illegally killed a Moose (*Alces alces*) in Alberta, claiming it was his right to harvest meat for subsistence. The charges were dropped by an Alberta court.

In addition to employment issues, the impact of waning traditional land use due to lifestyle and environmental change influenced their concern over Métis involvement in forest management. Not only did many feel that forestry under-provided in terms of opportunities, but that it significantly impacted their ability to access historic and traditional resource harvests due to environmental change. Traditional land uses are important to Métis in terms of identity and cultural continuity. They are concerned about a loss of culture, traditional knowledge of the land and sense of place-identity within the region. This loss of tradition is manifest in youth (and some adults) as social problems and it is widely held that if these people had a better connection to culture and the land these problems may be alleviated. These problems would also be mitigated with better employment; hence the issue becomes one of employment and competing in a contemporary economy and the desire to exert their agency as Métis with a connection to the cultural identity and history through traditional land uses. They are faced with a delicate balancing act.

The influence of culture and local landscape remains as strong predictor of their perceptions and values. The references to past lived experiences and a lifestyle based on a landscape prior to large scale industrial change and change in land use activity acts an indicator and measure for concern for current conditions. Change in the actual tactile living spaces and 'taskscape' is of great concern and effects perceptions of current well being and future potential. The 'good memories' of the past were a common feature of many interviews.

Métis opposition to forestry is therefore not absolute. There is a multi-dimensional knot of concerns that all cumulatively foster the dissatisfaction. These include the loss of resources, declining traditions and fading cultural identity, lack of employment opportunity and an apparent inability to affect change through formal government and corporate structures. The Métis opposition to forestry, and government and corporate forest policy, is based on emotions about Métis lifestyle and well being that seeks to extend this well being and Métis cultural agency into the future. However this type of rationality does not fit well with the objective-technical rationality used by forest managers. Although management authorities attempt to include Métis concerns and cultural sensitivities into their management plans, the momentum inherent in the resourcist rationality appears to ultimately be the more acceptable assumption of social and environmental well being.

Future Areas for Research

In uncovering the current Métis land use concerns in Northwest Saskatchewan a number of the core issues warrant further research. The formal channels through which Métis can expresses concern and contribute to land use policy are the public consultation and co-management processes. The apparent distrust and satisfaction with the channels of involvement needs attention. Although this issue has been researched in Canada with First Nation groups (Sherry and Myers, 2002; Nadasdy 2003 and Natcher and Davis, 2007) it has not been well addressed amongst the Métis of Northwest Saskatchewan. The findings in this study concerning these processes echo much of what these authors have found in other situations *viz.* the conforming of the process to the structure of the institutional powers, the need for aboriginals to adopt the discourse of institutional power and the lack of evidence of what costs are borne by Aboriginal communities through this process.

Bearing in the mind the thesis of my second paper, concerning the role and construction of nature values and the role they play, Natcher *et al* (2005, pp 241) write, "This cultural understanding necessarily includes the value and beliefs participants hold regarding social and ecological relationships, how they are prioritized and linked to each other, and that conflicts often arise from their differences". It is perhaps then not sufficient to aim for proportional representation in these processes. Future research could aim to test models that address a different structure of integrated management through consultation and co-management. Those few respondents who didn't express the same concerns and highlight the overt themes typically felt that Métis were not educated enough in forestry issues and forestry practice, and this was the reason for the majority concern. While this may be true, Wester-Herber (2004) believes that top-down approaches where experts educate the public typically do not work to quell environmental conflicts or risk perceptions. Thus a top-down approach to co-management or consultation where authorities educated the public about land use plans may be equally ineffective. In this region the 'public' are generally well aware of the environmental changes and nature of the land base, this knowledge influences very strong opinions and creates sharp divisions between industry and communities. Future research that addresses the different levels of knowledge adaptation within the integrated management process will be very revealing of the proportionality of influence with these processes.

The often mentioned relationship between the social problems experienced by youth and the decline in time on the land by these youth also warrants more in-depth attention. Chandler and Lalonde (1998) and Wilson and Rosenburg (2002) imply that cultural continuity and traditional activities are important constituents of overall health in amongst First Nation people in Canada. A more comprehensive study of time on the land amongst Métis and its connection to health would be very compelling.

The nature and role of internal divisions and splits within communities over land use policy was evident from the research. The factions that often divide communities over resource related issues, as noted by Beckley and Korber (1996), are often due to different allegiances to resource industries (Slowey, 2001). Research on the nature of people (or groups or people) in these communities relationship with industry, and the correlation to their perspective on land use policy, would be telling of why internal divisions hamper resource management involvement by the Métis.

In terms of local perception and the application of management policies, the effect of both institutional and physical boundaries is evident. The scope and influence of different social institutions such as town councils, Métis organizations and provincial organizations affects the local reach these different institutions have. Their range of influence covers different policies and responsibilities and often appears quite messy with respect to what different local organizations do, or do not do in the region. This uncertainty often leads people to unrealistic expectations and disappointment. Similarly, concern is often bound by geographical boundaries. As was mentioned by a SERM government employee, people have unknowingly or unnecessarily adopted certain boundaries as the range of interest such as within certain Fur-Conservation Blocks only, or the extent of the proposed Métis land claim. Thus the range and perception of concern within different boundaries often creates confusion and misunderstanding about land management issues and the institutions that attend to them. Understanding and disentangling the misunderstanding and often misdirected perceptions may help tremendously in helping all parties better understand the layers of involvement and concern.

This study focused very heavily on Métis perspectives. While most of recommendation for future research also attend to the Métis, it may be useful to incorporate more industry and government perspectives on these land use and cultural issues. In my first paper, the notion of structural momentum implies that the power holders dominate social relationships even if they don't openly plan to. More thorough understanding of industry and government approaches may help in understanding why the asymmetrical relations between them and the Métis are prevalent.

Concluding Remarks

The Métis of Northwest Saskatchewan face a changing and dynamic lifestyle and landscape. Like many other rural and Aboriginal communities, they recognize the value in their traditional land uses and the value in their local resources. In addition to this they are also engaged within a modern globalized economy and society where there is an implicit need to interact with government and business, typically through hierarchies and structures they feel out compete them (Slowey, 2001). The clash of values between Métis participants and industrial and governmental concerns in this study underscores a host of physical land use conflicts as well as a greater social discord.

Although the local effects of an expanding resource industry like forestry and the modernizing and changing of Métis lifestyles is understandably inevitable it is the process and outcomes of these effects that warrant attention. It is true that the notion of a ‘traditional lifestyle’ in no longer tenable and that it no longer exists as it once did, but that does not detract from the values that evolved from these traditions and the influence these values still hold. Beyond these local or cultural values the concern over environmental degradation and social well being are not uniquely Métis but for all intents and purposes inherent to any community. The impact of the industrial land uses and land use conflicts is pervasive and negatively effects communities and Métis culture.

Many of these land use concerns from Métis participants also serve as surrogate concerns over their position in society. The few participants’ who didn’t agree with the popular environmental concerns still expressed dissatisfaction at social power relations and dominance by industry and government, often referring to historical disempowerment of the Métis. Thus the land use conflicts serve not only to highlight this problem alone, but also highlight the nature of interaction that rural Métis in Northwest Saskatchewan experience with authorities.

As resource industries continue to grow, be it forestry or oil exploration for example, it will be important to examine the effect of these activities on local land uses and Métis involvement in these activities and their policies. Addressing economic incentives for these Métis communities is significant, this by admission of many participants, but so are other values and cultural concerns, such as the continuity of land use traditions amongst the youth. In order to legitimately include Métis stakeholders concerns, the consultation and co-management process needs to be authentically democratic and geared towards genuine two way exchange between parties. Industry and government need to be aware of the ongoing perceptions of their stakeholder consultation and inclusiveness of their management process. Métis communities would do well to be conscious of 'outside' views if Métis politics and factions as well, an issue that many participants in this study were well aware of. An intersection between commerce, employment for rural Métis communities, cultural continuity and the maintenance of local forest quality for activities external to fiber production will remain the goal of integrated land use policy that strives to satisfy a diverse range of land use values.

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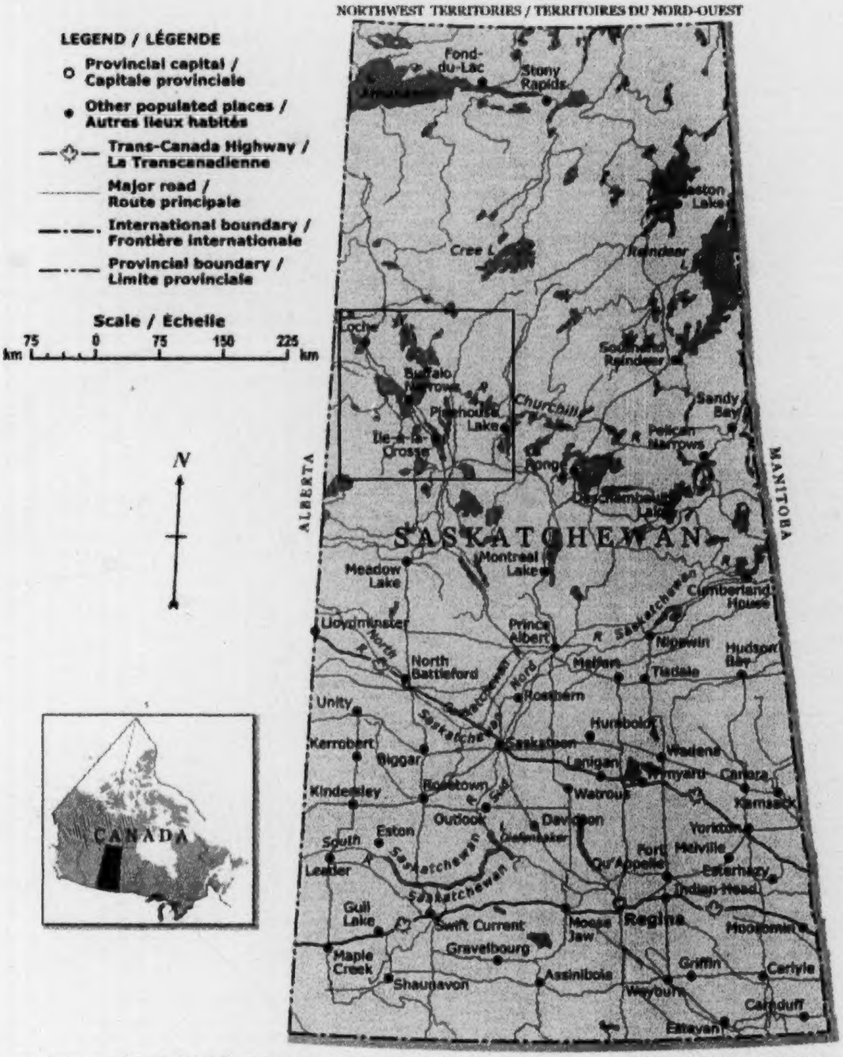
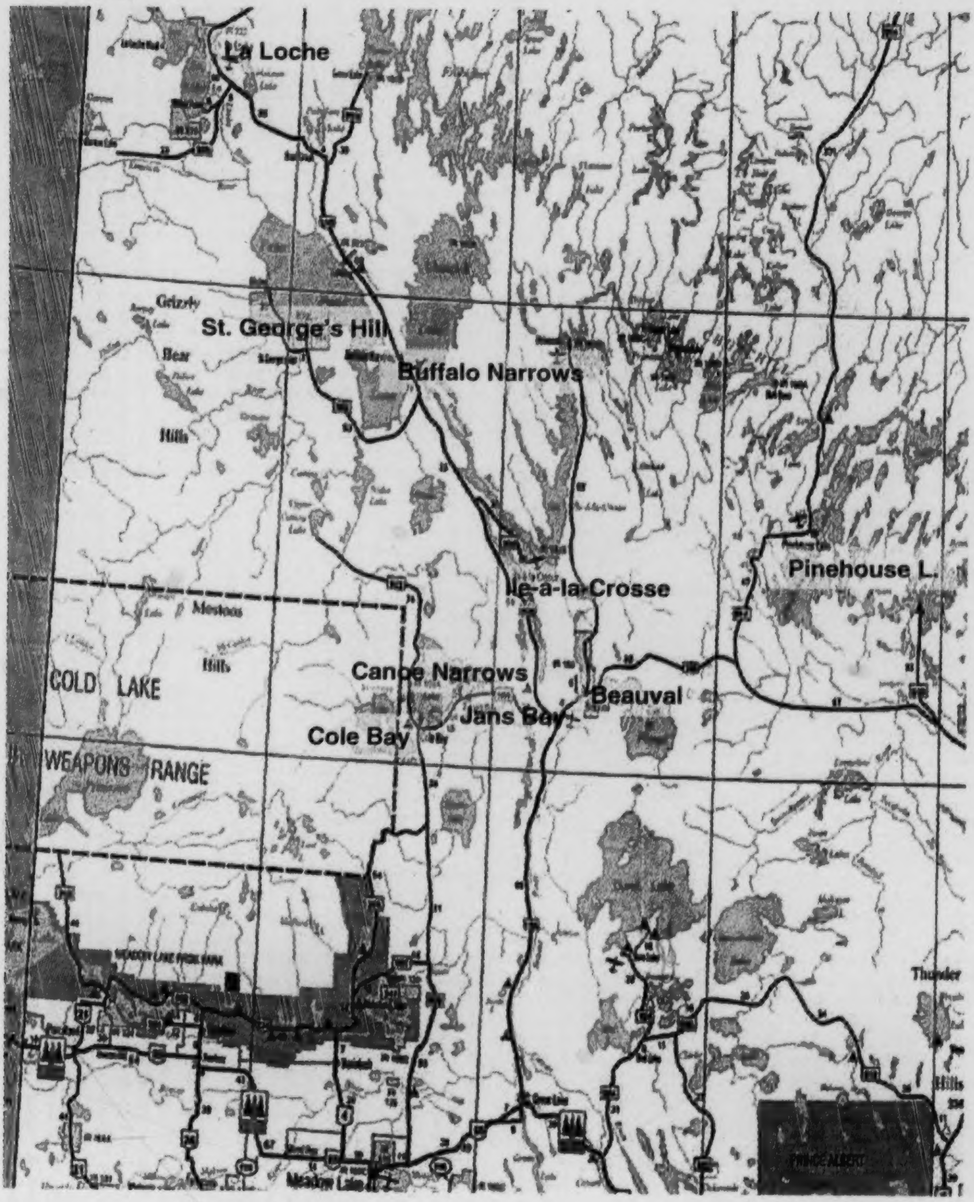
Appendix A

Research Region Map


NORTHWEST TERRITORIES / TERRITOIRES DU NORD-OUEST
LEGEND / LÉGENDE
○ Provincial capital / Capitale provinciale
● Other populated places / Autres lieux habités
Trans-Canada Highway / La Transcanadienne
Major road / Route principale
International boundary / Frontière internationale
Provincial boundary / Limite provinciale
Scale / Échelle
75 0 75 150 225
km km
N
CANADA
ALBERTA
MANITOBA
SASKATCHEWAN
Fond-du-Lac
Stony Rapids
Wollaston Lake
Reindeer L.
Cree L.
Southend Reindeer
La Loche
Buffalo Narrows
Churchill
Pinehouse Lake
Île-à-la-Crosse
Sandy Bay
Pelican Narrows
La Ronge
Deschambault Lake
Montreal Lake
Meadow Lake
Cumberland House
Lloydminster
North
Prince Albert
Nipawin
Hudson Bay
North Battleford
Melfort
Tisdale
Rosthern
Unity
Humboldt
Kerrobert
Saskatoon
Wadena
Biggar
Lanigan
Wynyard
Canora
Kindersley
Rosetown
Watrous
Kamsack
Outlook
Davidson
Eston
Yorkton
South
Diefenbaker
Fort
Melville
Leader
Qu'Appelle
Esterhazy
Saskatchewan
Indian Head
Gull Lake
Swift Current
Moose Jaw
Regina
Moosomin
Gravelbourg
Maple Creek
Griffin
Carlyle
Shaunavon
Assiniboia
Weyburn
Carnduff
Estevan
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
ÉTATS-UNIS D'AMÉRIQUE

© 2001. Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, Natural Resources Canada.
Sa Majesté la Reine du chef du Canada, Ressources naturelles Canada.

Blocked area highlights research region


La Loche
Grizzly Bear Hills
St. George's Hill
Buffalo Narrows
Ile-a-la-Crosse
Pinehouse L.
Mostoos Hills
COLD LAKE
Canoe Narrows
Beauval
Jans Bay
Cole Bay
WEAPONS RANGE
Thunder Hills
Meadow Lake
PRINCE ALBERT

Appendix B

Information Sheet: Community Members

Otipimsuak. The Free People. Métis Land and Society
Community Members

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Fax: 492-0268

Purpose:
As you may know, your community is involved with several other communities in a research partnership around Métis land use, history and access to natural resources. It is commonly referred to as the "CURA," or Community University Research Alliance project between the Métis of NW Saskatchewan, University of Alberta, and the University of Saskatchewan. We are part of a group of University of Alberta researchers who are studying the access Métis people have to forest resources and how land management policies have affected the Métis communities of NW Saskatchewan. For that reason, we are interested in talking to you as someone who has recently or is currently directly involved in activities in the forest.

Method:
CURA researchers will be looking at government documents, and talking to some government employees, but the most important part of this research is the understanding researchers' gain from talking to the community members themselves. If you agree to participate, you may decide where you would like the interview to take place, and then a researcher will meet you there. The interview is likely to take one to two hours of your time. There is no compensation given for the interview. The researcher will take notes, and also record the interview on audio-tape to make sure we don't miss anything you say. The interview may be listened to by a professional transcriber, or someone who types out what you say word for word, who must sign a confidentiality agreement stating s/he will not share what you say with anyone else or keep a copy of the transcript . Only the researchers on the project, Masters students Politylo and Joubert, and supervisors Krogman, Davidson and Song, will have access to the transcribed interviews. The transcribed interviews will be returned to the CURA Project PI, Frank Tough, after the project ends in 2008.

Voluntary Participation:
You can decide not to participate, not answer particular questions, or stop the interview after it has begun. If after the interview is over you decide you do not want your information used, please let the researchers know up to two weeks after the interview. If you wait any longer, there is a chance some reports might have already been written. We also realize that audio tape recorders may make some

people feel uncomfortable, so if you choose not to have your interview audio-taped that is ok. You may also receive copies of any reports that are written that use your interview, and we will collect your address to send these materials to you on the consent form.

Confidentiality:
We will only identify your name on reports and publications if you request that we do so (we will note this on the consent form). Otherwise, your interview will be identified with a number, and this is all that will show up in any written report. We may quote what you say, and for this reason, it is possible that someone might be able to figure out who you are based on what you say. These transcribed interviews will be held under lock and key in Davidson's office, and will be returned to your Métis Nation of Saskatchewan's regional office in three years. Identifying information will be removed from your interview.

Benefits:
The proposed research has been designed based on the priorities identified by community members themselves at a 4 day Métis community- University alliance workshop in Saskatoon, Sask, June of 2004, and during a meeting researchers had with community members at Pine House, Sask. Our hope is that this research will provide the NW Métis more detail about the ways land use decisions have been made in the recent past, how resource management practices are affecting Métis people, and provide some recommendations for greater NW Métis involvement in decision-making around natural resource management practices.

Risks:
We will not be able to interview everyone who has had or currently has direct involvement with forest resources, so some people may be disappointed that they are not part of this study. It is possible that this research raises community expectations that resource management policies will change as a result of this research. While the researchers on this project are not able to change policy, we hope that this work will influence policy by providing documentation of the current impact of natural resource management policies on Métis livelihoods to policy makers and government decision-makers.

Use of the information:
The interviews will be used to write a summary report to CURA partners, and to inform the next stage of research on Métis capacity to influence land use decisions. In addition, the information provided in the interviews may be presented at NW Métis meetings, academic conferences, and provincial government meetings. The interview findings may appear in journal articles and CURA reports. Any publication from these interviews will first be reviewed and approved by the CURA Steering committee, made up of NW Métis leaders and community members and CURA researchers. Any disagreement on the

interpretation of the findings will be explained in any publication from this research.

University contacts:
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, and would like to discuss them with someone who is not directly involved, you may contact:
Georgie Jarvis, Secretary to the Human Research Ethics Board, 2-14 Ag/For Centre, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2P5, Ph (780) 492-8126, Fax (780)492-0097

Community Contacts:
Duane Favel, Community Research Coordinator for Otipimsuak, PO Box 42, Ile a la Crosse, SK S0M 1C0, dfavel@sasktel.net, Phone: 306-833-2282, Fax; 306-833-2289, Philip Durocher: local21@sasktel.net, phone: 306-833-2301, Ray Laliberte: r.laliberte@sasktel.net, phone: 306-235-2205

Appendix C

Interview Guide: Community Members

Community Members Interview Guide

Personal experiences with natural resources

1. As you know, we are interested in the relationship of Métis people to forests in NW Saskatchewan. Can you tell me about how you use the forest?

2. Has your use of the forest changed in the past decade? If so, how? If yes, you have experienced changes, how do you explain the changes of your use of the forest? (*Drawing a time line of pivotal events may provide added clarity.*)

3. What kinds of opportunities, if any, have helped you earn at least part of your livelihood from the forest?

Maybe drop this if people don't seem to know about it

4. Tell me about the **Northwest Communities Wood Products (NWC).**

Probes: What does community-owned mean to you (including "Métis" vs. "Municipality" as the community)?
Do you have a sense of ownership or accessibility to the company?
Do you see NWC as representing your interests?
Do you see NWC as a potential source of employment?
Do you feel you have adequate training opportunities in things like forest management, or timber harvesting, to allow you to run a business?

5. What kinds of barriers, if any, have hindered you earning at least part of your livelihood from the forest?

Probe: are there ways you would like to access the forest but currently cannot?

6. Are there key concerns you have about the health of the forest in the area in which you spend most of your time?
7. What do you see as the greatest threats to the long-term livelihood of your community?

8. The Métis communities of NW Saskatchewan are involved in subsistence activities, local business enterprises, and have participated in corporate industrial development, such as mining. Can you discuss the importance of each of these in your mind to social and economic development in your community?

   - Subsistence activities
   - Local business enterprises
   - Industrial development

Political Involvement

9. How have you attempted to address your concerns, either about the health of the forest, or about restrictions on your access to the forest? How effective were these efforts?

   Probe: Have you ever been involved in forest management related meetings or consultations, either at the community or Provincial level? What was your experience as a participant in these meetings? How do you think these processes could be more effective?

   [Note questions 10 & 11 didn't yield much last time, try creative probes]

10. What groups or individuals have been supportive of you in your attempts to address these concerns? (Don't need names of people; affiliations are fine.)

11. What groups or individuals have been unsupportive, or opposed? (Ditto)

12. In what ways do you think members of your community could/should be more involved in resource management decisions concerning your community?

Appendix D

Oral Consent Form for Community Members

ORAL CONSENT FORM

(for community interviews)

To Participate in the University of Alberta Research Project:

Otipimsuak. The Free People. Métis Land and Society

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Debra.davidson@ualberta.ca
Phone Naomi: 492-4178, Phone Debra : 492-4598
Fax: 492-0268

I understand that I have been asked to participate in this study on the influence of natural resource policies on Métis access and use of land. I give my permission to be audio taped. I have read the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions. I also understand that I can quit taking part of the study at any time and withdraw the interview up to two weeks after the interview by contacting any of the researchers. I understand that my interview will be sent to the Métis Nation of Sask. Regional office 3 years after the interview has been conducted, and that the researchers taking part of this study will have access to the interview data. It is clear to me the information may be used to inform future research on the larger CURA project, and possibly be used in presentations, publications and publicly available reports.

Do you give consent to participate in this interview? Yes No

Special conditions the participant requested to do the interview:

This study was explained to the participant by:

Signature of Investigator Date

ADDRESS of participant noted here if participant would like summary document on interviews:

Appendix E

Information Sheet: Government Personnel

Otipimsuak. The Free People. Métis Land and Society
Government Personnel

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Debra.davidson@ualberta.ca
Phone Naomi: 492-4178, Phone Debra : 492-4598
Fax: 492-0268

Purpose:
As you may know, several Métis communities of NW Saskatchewan are involved with the Universities of Alberta and Saskatchewan in a research project about the scope and nature of Métis land use and tenure, and the historical processes that have shaped these communities. This project is often referred to the "CURA" or Community University Research Alliance project between the Métis of NW Saskatchewan, University of Alberta, and the University of Saskatchewan. The goal of this project is to provide a better understanding of the relationship between natural resource policy and these rural communities, assess the ways in which Métis have been involved in natural resource management in the region and land-related policy decisions, and highlight potential areas for improvement in Métis involvement in land use decisions.

Method:
We would like to speak with government personnel, who have had direct responsibility for, or experience with, the management of the forests in northwest Saskatchewan. If you agree to participate, the interview can take place at a location of your choosing, or on the phone. The researcher will take notes, and also record the interview on audio-tape. It will probably take about 45 minutes. The interview may be listened to by a professional transcriber, who must sign a confidentiality agreement stating s/he will not share what you say with anyone else or keep a copy of the transcript. Only the researchers on the project, Krogman, Davidson, Song and the graduate students, Politylo and Joubert, will have access to the transcribed interviews. These transcribed interviews will be held under lock and key in Davidson's office, and returned to the CURA project PI, Frank Tough, after the project ends in 2008.

Voluntary Participation:
You of course have the right not to participate, and you can also decide you don't want to participate after the interview has begun. You can also decide not to answer any questions. If after the interview is over you decide you do not want your information used, please let the researchers know up to two weeks after the interview. If you wait any longer, there is a chance some reports might have already been written. We also realize that audio tape recorders may make some people feel uncomfortable, so if you choose not to have your interview audio-

taped that is ok. If you would like, you may receive copies of any reports that are written that use your interview, and we will collect your address to send these materials to you on the consent form.

Confidentiality:
Your name or position will not be mentioned in any report, rather, your interview will be identified with a number, and this is all that will show up in any written report. We may find it important to report what you have said in the interview at length, since your direct words are important. In this case it is possible that someone might be able to figure out who you are based on what you say, but we will avoid this in our write up of the findings.

Benefits:
The proposed research has been designed based on the priorities identified by community members themselves at a 4 day Métis community- University alliance workshop in Saskatoon, Sask., June of 2004, and during a meeting researchers had with community members at Pine House, Sask. In general, Métis community members would like to see social science research that examines how policy has impacted their people, which can provide insights as to how NW people may become more involved in forest use, management, and related natural resource management decisions. It would help us to understand the opportunities and obstacles that government personnel have experienced in their work with the Métis, and the ways in which government personnel have interacted, are currently interacting, and would like to interact, with Métis people on forestry-related issues. We believe this information will be helpful to the Provincial government and Environment Canada in pointing to some of the ways in which natural resource policies can support Métis communities and work towards mutual goals around conservation and biodiversity.

Risks:
We do not foresee any risks of this research to you, however, in some cases, you may feel uncomfortable answering a question in your capacity as a government representative. While we would like to hear your most honest answers, we will be careful to present your responses in a way in which no one can be identified and that recognizes the challenges government personnel face as they attempt to meet all of their work responsibilities. It is possible that others in your office may see us meet with you and identify your comments given we may only interview ten or so government representatives.

Use of the information:
The interviews will be used to write a summary report to CURA partners, and to inform the next stage of research on Métis institutional capacity. In addition, the information provided in the interviews may be presented at meetings in Saskatchewan which we are asked to share our findings and academic

conferences. The interview findings may appear in journal articles and CURA reports.

Contacts:
If you have any questions or concerns about this research, and would like to discuss them with someone who is not directly involved, you may contact:
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2-14 Ag/For Centre, University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB T6G 2P5
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Appendix F

Interview Guide: Government Members

Government Members Interview Guide

General

1. Can you tell me a bit about the responsibilities you have in your position? How long have you been in your current position?

2. What issues are taking up all your attention these days?

3. As you know, we are interested in the relationship of Métis people to forests in NW Saskatchewan. Can you tell me about the capacity in which you interact with Métis people in NW Saskatchewan?

4. What are your impressions of Métis values associated with forests, or, their relationship with the forest?

5. To the best of your knowledge, has your office's involvement with Métis people changed in the past decade? If so, how? Have you had an opportunity to observe the effects of these changes on the forest? On the Métis?

Forest Management

6. Are there ways you think Métis peoples in NW Saskatchewan should be able to access the forest but currently cannot?

7. Are there any key concerns you have about the activities of Métis peoples and their role in forest management in NW Saskatchewan?

8. Have you been involved in forest management related community or Provincial-level meetings with the Métis (round tables, open houses, public meetings, consultations)? What was your experience as a participant in these meetings?

9. Do you have any ideas about how relations between your office and Métis communities could be improved?

Economic Development

10. What do you think needs to be in place to enable the Métis people to earn at least part of their livelihoods from the forest?

11. What kinds of barriers, if any, have hindered Métis people from earning at least part of their livelihoods from the forest?

12. Are there restrictions on forest access that Métis community members face?

Maybe drop this if time is short....

13. Can you tell me a bit about the **Northwest Communities Wood Products (NWC)** company?

    Probes: Has it been a successful venture? What are some of the problems, if any? What does community-owned mean to you?

14. Are there other forest tenure arrangements where Métis communities are tenure holder in some part, either existing now or in planning stages?

15. Can you tell me about the Northern Development Strategy? Has the Northern Development Strategy been effective for increasing long-term economic development? How?

16. What role do you feel value-added (secondary manufacturing) plays in forestry in the region? (Or, do you think there is a role?)

Appendix G

Oral Consent Form: Government Members

ORAL CONSENT FORM

(for government employees)

To Participate in the University of Alberta Research Project:Otipimsuak. The Free People. Métis Land and Society

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I understand that I have been asked to participate in this study on the influence of natural resource policies on Métis access and use of land. I give my permission to be audio taped. I have read the information sheet and have the opportunity to ask questions at any time. I also I understand that I can quit taking part of the study at any time and withdraw the interview up to two weeks after the interview by contacting any of the researchers. I understand the researchers taking part of this study will have access to the interview data. It is clear to me the information may be used to inform future research on the larger CURA project, and possibly be used in presentations, publications and publicly available reports.

Do you agree to participate in this interview? Yes No

Special conditions the participant requested to do the interview:

This study was explained to me by:

Signature of Investigator Date

ADDRESS noted if participant would like summary document on interviews:

Appendix H

Nodes and Coding Matrix

Parent Node	Child Node	Grand-Child Node	*Coded in Source Document (# of times)	Node used # of Times
Access to Resources			71	451
	Physical Access		67	283
	Qualitative Access		62	268
Cultural and Traditional			71	939
Access to economic opportunities			69	700
	Job Competition		38	96
	Jobs Available		63	278
	Self Employment		54	158
	Support and Training		57	252
Environmental Concerns			71	482
	Effect of Env Changes		45	197
Financial Livelihood			61	272
	Forestry Financial Livelihood		41	96
	Non-Forestry Financial Livelihood		48	167
Forest Product			71	596
	Non-Timber Forest Product Use		71	426
		Consumptive non-timber use	61	317
		Non-Consumptive non-timber	51	100

Parent Node	Child Node	use Grand-Child Node	*Coded in Source Document (# of times)	Node used # of Times
	Timber Product Use		47	159
Key actors			35	126
Natural Resource Knowledge			63	356
NW Forest products			58	132
Politics			69	1046
	Community Politics		66	643
	Corporate Politics		48	160
	Federal~Provincial gov		58	262
	Resource Poltics		58	501
Threats and perceived inherent stumb			69	938
Wholistic resource strategies			43	162

* Note: the existence of 71 source documents out of 66 interview transcriptions is due to some interviews being recorded and transcribed in two parts. The interviews were separted into three sets and coded by two researchers. There was accidental dupilcation of two interviews and this was factored into the analysis but still refelcts as a total number of source documents in NVIVO.